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ABSTRACT

The study, involving 160 families, was designed to identify the barriers that lower socioeconomic parents of special education students encounter when they attempt to participate in their child's educational program and to develop a handbook of ideas based on parents' suggestions for overcoming those barriers. Interviews were conducted with parents and teachers in seven areas: level of participation in school site activities, extent of participation in educational decision making, difference in participation related to placement, special education compared to regular education parent participation, barriers to parental participation identified by parents, barriers identified by teachers, and strategies and activities recommended by parents. Among major findings were that parents of learning disabled students participated less than parents of physically or severely handicapped students, and barriers to participation identified by parents varied slightly with ethnicity but most barriers were consistent across all groups. Appendixes, which make up more than half the document, include interview forms, letters, and consent forms. (SB)

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# Barriers to Full Participation of Lower Socioeconomic Parents of Special Education Students in School Activities

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(Project Director)

Prepared Under Grant No. 37-3062-80-3293-7100 from the California State Department of Education

Department of Special Education
San Diego State University
March, 1981

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## FOREWORD

This project was sponsored by the California State Department of Education. The study was conducted between May 1, 1980, and March 13, 1981, in the San Diego Unified School District. The findings, conclusions, and products developed by the project are the sole responsibility of the principal investigator and do not imply the official position or endorsement of the California State Department of Education, the San Diego Unified School District, or San Diego State University.

This study could not have been conducted without the support and cooperation of the parents, teachers, specialists, and administrative personnel in the San Diego Unified School District. Each person involved provided knowledge, skill, and a remarkable commitment to the successful completion of the study. Special thanks must be given to the Special Education Parent Facilitators and the Evaluation Specialists in the District who provided their time and expertise throughout all phases of the study. Thanks is also extended to the Special and Regular Education Administrators who provided facilitation in the initial phases of the project and interest and support throughout. The San Diego State University Teacher Corps Project, the Social Science Research Lab, the Learning Resources Center, and the San Diego State University Foundation all provided their expertise in specific aspects of the project.

Finally, I would like to thank Dr. Lalit Roy for his advice, consultation, and support throughout the study.

Eleanor W. Lynch

Eleanor W. Lynch, Ph.D.
March 13, 1981

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### Barriers to Full Participation of Lower Socioeconomic Parents of Special Education Students in School Activities

#### Purpose

The purpose of this study was to identify the barriers that lower socioeconomic parents of special education students encounter when they attempt to participate in their child's educational program and to develop a handbook of ideas based on parents' suggestions for overcoming those barriers.

#### Research Questions

The study was designed to investigate the following seven questions.

(1) To what extent do lower socioeconomic parents of special education students participate in school site activities?

(2) To what extent do lower socioeconomic parents of special education students participate in educational decision-making for their child?

(3) Is there a difference in the level of participation of lower socioeconomic parents which relates to the type of special education placement.

(4) Is there a difference in level of participation of lower socioeconomic parents of special education and non-special education students?

(5) What barriers to participation are identified by lower socioeconomic parents of special education students?

(6) What barriers to parent participation are identified by special education teachers?

(7) What strategies or activities do lower socioeconomic parents of special education students recommend to increase parent/school/community communication and participation?

## Design

Parent subjects for the survey were randomly selected from the district special education rosters of two elementary, one junior high, one high school, and six special schools. The income status of the subject pool was validated by a cross-check with the free and reduced school lunch eligibility lists by the Food Services Department. Of the 200 families in the pool, 106 could be interviewed (53%). Each of the 106 families was interviewed by a Special Education Parent Facilitator trained in the use of the questionnaire. Interviews were conducted in the home in the family's preferred language. In several cases a family member served as an interpreter. In six instances the interviews were conducted over the telephone at the family's request. All of the special education teachers at each of the 10 schools were asked to participate in the study. Of the 112 teachers, 66 were interviewed (58%) by Special Education Parent Facilitators on a parallel interview form; and 59 interviews were analyzed (53%).

## Results

Findings are elaborated in the project's final report and in the handbook titled, But I've Tried Everything! A Special Educator's Guide to Working With Parents; but a summary of results by research question number is provided in this summary.

### Question 1 - Level of Participation in School Site Activities

- Thirty-four percent of the parents interviewed had attended a P.T.A., P.T.O., P.S.T.A., or other parent group meeting in the past year. Fifty-eight percent had not; eight percent weren't sure or didn't know.

- Seventy-five percent had attended a meeting or activity at school in the past two years. Twenty-four percent had not, and one percent wasn't sure or didn't know.

### Question 2 - Extent of Participation in Educational Decision-Making

- Sixty-two percent of the parents interviewed felt they were active participants in the development of their child's I.E.P. Thirty percent felt they were not, and eight percent weren't sure or didn't know.

- Forty-four percent offered suggestions about their child's placement at the I.E.P. Forty percent offered no suggestions; eleven percent weren't sure or didn't know; and five percent said the question was inappropriate.

Question 3 - Difference in Participation Related to Placement

- Parents of students in learning handicapped programs participated least in P.T.A., P.T.O., P.S.T.A., or other parent groups in the last year. Parents of severely handicapped students participated most.

- Parents of students in all categories (LH, CH, PH, SH) had participated about equally in meetings and activities during the past two years.

- Over 80% of parents of severely handicapped students had observed in their child's classroom. Over 66% of parents of students in classrooms for physically handicapped and communicatively handicapped had observed; and 18% of parents of students in placement for learning handicapped students had observed.

- Seventy-six percent of parents of students in programs for severely handicapped students felt that they were active participants in the I.E.P. compared to 66% for physically and communicatively handicapped and 58% learning handicapped.

Question 4 - Special Education Compared to Regular Education Parent Participation

Data from a concurrent study of 482 parents in the same elementary, junior high, and high schools by the SDSU Teacher Corps Project was used for comparison.

- Twenty-three percent of the regular education sample had attended P.T.A., P.S.T.A., P.T.O., or other parent groups in the last year; 34% of the special education sample had attended.

- Fifty-seven percent of the regular education sample had attended a school activity or meeting in the last two years; 74% of the special education sample had attended.

- Seventy-five percent of the regular education sample knew their child's records were available; 39% had examined them. Eighty-four percent of the special education sample knew that records were available; 37% had examined them.

- Eighty-six percent of the regular education and 81% of the special education sample indicated that they would feel "comfortable" or "very comfortable" contacting the school about their child.

Question 5 - Barriers to Parental Participation Identified by Parents

- Parents of special education students identified nine barriers: (1) communication problems, (2) transportation problems, (3) babysitting problems, (4) lack of time, (5) lack of understanding of the system, (6) feelings of inferiority, (7) feeling that the problem won't be resolved, (8) language/ cultural differences, and (9) realistically facing the child's disability.

Question 6 - Barriers to Parental Participation Identified by Teachers

- Teachers of special education students identified the following five barriers: (1) lack of time and energy, (2) apathy, (3) lack of real understanding and judgment, (4) school is too technical, and (5) school's lack of valuing parents' input.

Question 7 - Strategies and Activities Recommended by Parents

- The handbook developed by the project titled, But I've Tried Everything! A Special Educator's Guide to Working With Parents elaborates the suggestions parents made for overcoming school barriers.

## Recommendations

One of the study's major findings was the discrepancy between barriers identified by parents and barriers identified by teachers. In order for more effective interactions to take place, this discrepancy must be reduced. With that in mind, the following recommendations are submitted to the State Department of Education for consideration.

1. The handbook, But I've Tried Everything! A Special Educator's Guide to Working With Parents, should be expanded into workbook form.

2. A three to five hour workshop for teachers and administrators should be developed based on the above products, field tested, evaluated, modified, and packaged for inservice training staff.

3. Inservice trainers throughout the state should be trained in the delivery of the workshop.

4. In the interim, the handbook itself should be widely disseminated to sensitize school personnel to the real difficulties experienced by parents in their attempts to participate in school activities.

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# INTRODUCTION

## Background

Education in the United States has historically espoused the belief that parents are critical in the educational process. Having them involved in the school program, or at least supporting it in the home, has been viewed as extremely important to effective classroom teaching. The words "supporting it in the home" are worth noting. In the past, support implied unquestioned concurrence with the methods, materials, and decisions made by educators. The kind of parental involvement that schools wanted was support for whatever was done at school. More specifically, educators wanted the judgments made at school to be the judgments made at home and the standards set at school to be those applied in the home. If the goal at that time in our history was the passing down of a single historical and cultural tradition through the study of reading, writing, and arithmetic, our expectations for parents may have been appropriate. However, society and education have changed. The United States is moving toward a culturally pluralistic society in which cultural identity through the maintenance of language, traditions, and beliefs is an important value. Education, too, has changed. Throughout the past two decades, the role of the school has been enlarged dramatically to include content and students originally served only by the home. The roles of both schools and families in education have changed. Parental participation has come to mean the active involvement of parents in their child's school program (Heward, Dardig, & Rossett, 1979; Kroth, 1975).

## Review of Literature

One of the first major forces that lead to attempts to include parents in their child's educational program was the enactment of Title I legislation (U.S.D.H.E.W., 1965) designed to aid economically disadvantaged students. Applications for Title I support from local education agencies were required to:

> (1) describe how parents of the children were consulted and involved in planning the project; (2) set forth the specific plans for continuing the involvement of such parents in the future planning and in the development and operation of the project.

Because of this legislation, school personnel began to view parent involvement more systematically and to develop strategies

for parents to become involved in a variety of capacities. Nebgen (1979) described four ways in which parents have become involved in Title I programs including roles: (1) as observers or learners, (2) as participants in school activities, (3) as volunteers in the classroom, and (4) as participants on school advisory committees. Although the specific activities have varied, these roles have been observed in Title I programs across the country. In Nebgen's (1979) examination of the level of parental involvement in each of the four roles and the effects of the involvement, she found that parents were most involved as observers/learners and as participants in school activities. Far fewer parents participated as volunteers or as members of school advisory committees. Studies of the effects of parental participation as observers/learners in the school have not been conducted, but Title I programs with high levels of parent participation in school activities have tended to show corresponding gains in child achievement (Gordon, 1970). These gains, however, cannot be directly attributed to parental participation because of the confounding effects of other variables. Links have been made between parental participation and increase in parental self-image and self-esteem which could be hypothesized to result in improved achievement of their children, but at this time no data exists to support that hypothesis.

In general, Title I legislation provided a framework for including low income parents in their child's educational program. Many of these programs have been successful in getting parents involved in a variety of roles. The research on parental involvement in Title I programs links, but does not directly attribute, student achievement gains to high levels of parent participation. Perhaps one of the most important results that has come from the Title I research is the finding that lower socioeconomic status parents can and will become participants in their child's school program when they are supported, encouraged, and rewarded for their involvement. The general notion that low-income parents don't care and won't participate has been negated.

A second major event which changed the role of parents from silent to active partners in their child's education was the enactment of Public Law 94-142, The Education of All Handicapped Children Act of 1975. This law included parents as full participants on the educational team. It guaranteed parents of students receiving special education services the right to be involved in the assessment of their child's needs and in the development of
roles given to parents through P.L. 94-142 are far more encompassing than those granted by Title I legislation. Public Law 94-142 makes parents equal partners in educational decision-making and grants due process rights. Although the legislation

guarantees parental rights and provides a structure for including them and utilizing their input, parental participation has not been as extensive as had been hoped or anticipated (Blatt, 1978). Many parents have continued to stay away from the school and to forfeit their rights and responsibilities as members of the educational team. This pattern of non-participation has been especially evident among lower socioeconomic status families (Nobgen, 1979).

A number of reasons for this lack of parental involvement have been suggested in the literature. Parents, especially low income parents, of students receiving special education services have been characterized as apathetic, unrealistic, cynical, hostile, uninformed, or unreasonable (Gorham, 1975; Bell-Nathaniel, 1979; Marion, 1980). The stereotyping of minorities and the poor has been perpetuated by the attribution of negative traits to lower socioeconomic status parents of students in special education. However, articles written by parents of handicapped children have presented a somewhat different picture of the nature of the problems that lead to parental non-involvement. Parents have described the educational system as negative, intimidating, uncaring, and unresponsive (Turnbull & Turnbull, 1978; Markel & Greenbaum, 1979). In attempts to remedy these problems, a number of books have been written on parent training and parent involvement (Kroth, 1975; Rutherford and Edgar, 1979; Heward, Dardig, and Rossett, 1979; Seligman, 1980). Although each of these makes important contributions to training teachers to work more effectively with parents, none of the publications are data-based. The ideas are those of professionals, not parents. It is the lack of a parental database that this project addressed.

## Research Questions

The primary objectives of this study were to identify the barriers encountered by lower socioeconomic parents of students receiving special education services, to solicit parents' ideas for overcoming those barriers, and to develop a handbook for school personnel based on parents' suggestions. In order to accomplish those objectives, the following seven research questions were investigated.

(1) To what extent do lower socioeconomic parents of special education students participate in school site activities?

(2) To what extent do lower socioeconomic parents of special education students participate in educational decision-making for their child?

(3) Is there a difference in the level of participation of lower socioeconomic parents which relates to the type of special education placement?

(4) Is there a difference in level of participation of lower socioeconomic parents of special education and non-special education students?

(5) What barriers to participation are identified by lower socioeconomic parents of special education students?

(6) What barriers to parent participation are identified by special education teachers?

(7) What strategies or activities do lower socioeconomic parents of special education students recommend to increase parent/school/community communication and participation?

These questions were investigated in a large, metropolitan, culturally diverse, southern California city. A description of the approach and methodology follows.

## METHODS OF STUDY

### Approach

The study was conducted in the San Diego Unified School District with the full cooperation and support of district administrators, specialists, evaluators, and Special Education Parent Facilitators. All aspects of the study were collaborative with special assistance provided by the Evaluation Services Department. This study was conducted concurrently with a study of the barriers to school participation faced by lower socioeconomic status parents of students in regular education by the S.D.S.U. Teacher Corps Project (Appendix A). A parallel interview form was used in that study. Data from that project will be presented for comparison in the "FINDINGS" section of this report. It should also be noted that the San Diego Unified School District has extended this study for their 1980-81 Master Plan Evaluation. A shortened, but parallel, interview form was used with approximately 440 additional families of students receiving special education services. The data from that study can be pooled with the data from this study to form a larger subject pool for cross-group analyses.

For this study two structured interview forms paralleling the one designed for the Teacher Corps study were constructed by

the Special Education Parent Facilitator Team Leaders, an evaluation specialist from San Diego Unified School District, and the project director. The interview forms were approved by the administrative staff of the District and the Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects at San Diego State University (Appendix B). The "Parent Interview Form" (Appendix C) was used to collect data from parents of students receiving special education services. The "Teacher Interview Form" (Appendix D) was used to collect data from special education teachers in the district. Parent interviews were conducted in the parents' home in their preferred language. In six instances, interviews were conducted by telephone at the parents' request. Teacher interviews were conducted at the schools during non-instructional times using a parallel interview form. The same cadre of seven Special Education Parent Facilitators[1] conducted both the parent and teacher interviews. Data was analyzed at the San Diego State University Social Science Research Lab; and results were reviewed by the Team Leaders, project director, and others to develop an idea book for teachers titled, But, I've Tried Everything! A Special Educator's Guide to Working with Parents.

## Sampling Procedures

Parent subjects representing students in two elementary, one junior high, one high school, and six special schools were randomly selected from the District's alphabetical, special education rosters. The elementaries, junior high, and high schools were selected because they: (1) receive Title I funds, (2) were the schools used in the Teacher Corps study, and (3) reflect the cultural diversity found in the greater San Diego area. So that the full range of special education services and severity of disabilities would be represented, six special schools were also selected. These schools provide services for physically handicapped and severely handicapped (moderately mentally retarded, severely and profoundly mentally retarded, autistic, severely emotionally disturbed) students. A pool of 100 student names from the four regular sites and 100 student names from the six special sites was randomly selected from the special education rosters. One hundred names from the four regular sites equalled 27% of the special education population at those sites. One hundred names from the six special sites was equivalent to 14% of the students receiving services at those sites.

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[1]Special Education Parent Facilitators are parents of students in special education programs who have received training in communication, law, advocacy, supportive techniques, and so forth through a special project. They are paid by the District to assist other parents in working with and obtaining services for their children with handicaps.

Because interview questions regarding socioeconomic status could not be asked, validation of the sample was done indirectly. First, Title I schools were selected. Second, data from the 1975 City of San Diego Special Census was used (Knowles, 1980) to determine median income for the elementary schools used in the study which feed the junior high and high school. That information is presented in Table I.

Additional information gathered from the census figures indicated that the percentage of renters in the target elementaries was 70% for school one and 63% for school two while the overall district percentage is 47%. And third, an additional step was taken to assure that the sample represented low-income families. The student names drawn in the sample were cross-checked by a clerk (to preserve confidentiality) in the Food Services Department of the District with the free and reduced lunch eligibility rosters. By regular school, from 34% to 56% of the sample met eligibility requirements. These findings were considered adequate to assume that the families chosen were predominantly low-income.

In the special schools, economic status could not be as clearly determined. Because these schools serve students from all areas of the District, the same kinds of income and renter information was not available. The sample was, however, cross-checked with the free and reduced school lunch program rosters and from 30% to 70% of the sample were found to be eligible in five of the six schools. A percentage was not calculated for the center for severely and profoundly retarded students. Although more middle-income families were no doubt included in the special school sample, this is not unexpected since severe disabilities are more evenly distributed throughout the population than mild disabilities.

In summary, the indirect measures of socioeconomic status which were used were deemed adequate to validate the low-income status of the sample. This was further substantiated by the observations of interviewers in the homes.

A second sample was drawn which included all of the special education teachers in the two elementaries, the junior high, high school, and six special schools totalling 112 teachers. Only full-time, special class teachers or resource specialists were included. Counselors, adaptive physical educators, and other ancillary staff were not included.

## Methods

### Parent Interviews:

The parent interviews were conducted during August and September, 1980. After the sample of 200 student names had been drawn and validated, a computer run was made to get parent

TABLE I

MEDIAN INCOME OF TARGET ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS*

| School | Median Income |
|---|---|
| Elementary 1 | $6759. |
| Elementary 2 | $7089. |

*Median Income for District = $10,509.

names, mailing addresses and telephone numbers. A letter briefly describing the study and signed by the Director of the Special Education Department was mailed to each of the families (Appendix E) inviting them to participate. The letter indicated that they would be contacted by a Special Education Parent Facilitator in the next few days.

Concurrently, eight Special Education Parent Facilitators were trained in the use of the interview form. Special Education Facilitators were selected to do the interviewing because they are themselves parents of handicapped children; they have received special training in communication skills; and they work with both teachers and parents in the schools and ir the homes. The experience, training, and parent-to-parent rapport that they brought to the interview situation was a major strength of the study. The first four-hour training session included the following: review of interviewing techniques, review of the interview form, directions on marking the forms, and practice interviews. In the second training session the topics mentioned above were reviewed and the interview assignments distributed.

Each interviewer received a packet of interview and consent forms, a list of addresses and phone numbers for families that they were to contact, and a packet of pre-stamped postcards which could be used to confirm appointments with families. Assignment of families to interviewers was done by the project director and was based on three criteria. First, families whose preferred language was not English were assigned to a bilingual interviewer. Second, assignment was done by zip code to minimize the amount of travel for the interviewers. Third, interviewers were assigned to families that they did not know to minimize bias. All of the demographic data on the first page of the form was pre-coded from District records by the project director.

The interviewers had slightly longer than three weeks to complete their interviews. In many instances, families without phones were visited to set up appointments. As mentioned earlier in this report, six families wanted to participate but requested that the interview be done on the telephone. In all other cases, the interviews were done in the homes. Signed consent forms were obtained before the interview (Appendix F). Although every effort was made to assure that interviews were conducted in the family's preferred language, a significant problem arose. The bilingual interviewer left the country without conducting any of the interviews necessitating the use of a translator in a number of interviews. This event contributed, I am sure, to the under-representation of Spanish-speaking families in the sample. Although this could not be rectified in this study, the data from the San Diego Unified School District Master Plan evaluation mentioned earlier can ultimately be pooled with these data

to strengthen the results as they relate to Mexican-American families.

The completed interview forms were returned to the project director in a group debriefing meeting, assigned identification numbers, and taken to the Social Science Research Lab for coding and data analysis.

Teacher Interviews:

Teacher interviews were conducted during a three-week period in November and December, 1980. All of the special education teachers (classroom and resource specialists) in the four regular and six special sites were invited to participate in the study. A letter signed by either the Assistant Superintendent for Elementary or the Assistant Superintendent for Secondary Schools (Appendix G) was mailed to each teacher's home address. Seven of the original eight interviewers were trained to use this instrument in a single group session and packets including interview and consent forms, lists of home and school addresses and phone numbers, and pre-stamped postcards were distributed. The assignments of interviewers to teachers were made by the project director. Interviewers were not assigned to schools where they had worked or where their own children attended.

Although teachers were given the option to have the interview at their home, at school during non-instructional time, or at another mutually convenient place, all selected to have the interview at school. Written consent was obtained before the interview began (Appendix H) and each interview was conducted privately. Completed interview forms were returned to the project director, assigned an identification number and taken to the Social Science Research Lab for coding and data analysis.

## Instruments

The interview forms for parents and teachers (Appendix C and Appendix D) were "second generation" instruments. The parent interview form was designed to parallel one developed by the S.D.S.U. Teacher Corps Project's Home/School/Community Task Team composed of parents, San Diego Unified School District personnel, and San Diego State University faculty. The Teacher Corps Parent Interview Form (Appendix A) had been used successfully with 482 parents of students in regular education at the same elementaries, junior high, and high school used in this study in May, June, and July of 1980. The Teacher Interview Form used in this project was also written to parallel one developed, but not implemented, by Teacher Corps.

The Teacher Corps instruments were reviewed by the Special Education Parent Facilitator Team Leaders, an evaluation specialist assigned to the project from the District, and the project director. Although a number of items were preserved intact, three major changes were made. Those changes included: (1) decreasing the number of items and length of the form, (2) deleting most questions that did not seem to focus on the identification or resolution of problems that parents encounter when interacting with schools, and (3) adding questions which related directly to special education services and the IEP process. Teacher Corps' experience with the interview form had demonstrated that over 60 questions, many with multiple parts, was too long. Many of the items deleted for this study related to homework, child health problems, television in the home, truancy, and class and career counseling. The committee did not feel that these questions would be helpful in identifying major barriers to participation encountered by parents. Thus, those items were eliminated. The questions which were added were directed toward determining parents' level of satisfaction and problems with special education services and procedures. The majority of the additional questions were taken from the 1979-80 S.R.I. study. Those questions were selected because they had been tested with a large population and later comparisons could be made between samples. After the Parent Interview Form was completed, it was reviewed for technical problems at the Social Science Research Lab.

The Teacher Interview Form was developed by the same team. The only changes were editorial. Specifically, the Teacher Interview Form was written to enable teachers to respond about parent participation from their experience and perspective.

## Data Collection Process

Both the Parent and Teacher Interview Forms were printed on heavy bond paper. To assist the interviewer, long questions were typed on single, color-coded cards which were laminated. When the interviewer asked those questions, she referred the interviewee to the cards. Both English and Spanish versions of the cards were available. In addition to making multiple-part questions easier to answer, the cards gave the interviewee something to look at and hold onto throughout the interview. On close-ended questions, all of the responses were numbered and encased between parallel lines. The interviewer marked the box that corresponded with the interviewee's response. For open-ended responses, lines were printed on the interview form. A yellow high-lighter was used to mark close-ended questions. This strategy was used for two reasons. First, a marker can be used rapidly with little effort required to make an obvious mark; and second, the bright yellow marks were easier for coders to identify and process quickly. Open-ended responses

were recorded with pen or pencil. Interviewers were instructed to look over each interview form at the completion of each interview to assure that all questions had been asked and that no data was missing. In general, the interview forms were extremely well completed with far fewer missing cases than is typically found in a sample of this size.

## Percent of Response

Of the 200 families drawn for the sample, 106 were interviewed (53%). The largest attrition from the study was caused by the dropout of one of the interviewers. Since no one was aware of the dropout, other interviewers could not be assigned to those families. Vacations, changes of address, and lack of time accounted for some attrition. In only three cases did parents refuse to participate.

Of the 112 teachers invited to participate, 66 were actually interviewed (59%). Seven of these interviews were returned late and were not included in the analysis, so the results reported represent 53% of the sample. Attrition was primarily due to scheduling difficulties with fewer than six teachers refusing to be interviewed.

## Data Analysis

Data analysis was done by the Social Science Research Lab at San Diego State University. Frequency responses were calculated for all respondents then re-calculated by program category, ethnicity, and chronological age of the child. At this time, no tests of significance have been run and only percentages will be reported. It should, however, be noted that the more than 400 additional interviews being conducted for the District's Master Plan evaluation are also being analyzed at S.S.R.L., and both sets of data can be pooled and re-analyzed. The data from that study will be available at the end of this school year.

# FINDINGS

## Demographic Characteristics of Parent Sample

Demographic characteristics of the sample of 106 families are presented in the tables that follow. Table II depicts the number of families interviewed by children's age. Table III shows the number of families interviewed by primary special education program category; and Table IV depicts the ethnic

TABLE II

AGE OF STUDENTS REPRESENTED

| Chronological Age | Number of Stdents | % |
|---|---|---|
| C.A. 2-5 | 7 | 7 |
| C.A. 6-11 | 17 | 16 |
| C.A. 12-13 | 20 | 19 |
| C.A. 14-20 | 45 | 40 |
| Missing | 17 | 16 |
| Total | 106 | 98* |

*Not 100% because of rounding errors.

TABLE III

NUMBER OF FAMILIES BY PROGRAM CATEGORY

| Program - Service Category | No. of Students | % |
|---|---|---|
| LH Special Day Class* | 14 | 13 |
| LH Resource Specialist Services | 31 | 29 |
| CH | 3 | 3 |
| PH Special Day Class | 14 | 13 |
| PH Designated Instructional Services | 3 | 3 |
| SH Autistic | 1 | 1 |
| SH Developmentally Handicapped | 10 | 9 |
| SH Severely Emotionally Disturbed | 12 | 11 |
| SH T.M.R. | 17 | 16 |
| No Category Reported | 1 | 1 |
| Total | 106 | 99** |

*LH = Learning Handicapped
CH = Communicatively Handicapped
PH = Physically Handicapped
SH = Severely Handicapped

**Not 100% due to rounding errors.

TABLE IV

PERCENTAGE OF FAMILIES BY ETHNICITY

| Ethnicity | Number | Percent of Sample |
|---|---|---|
| Hispanic | 12 | 11.3% |
| White | 70 | 66.0% |
| Black | 22 | 20.8% |
| Asian-Pacific Islander | 1 | 0.9% |
| Filipino | 1 | 0.9% |
| Total | 106 | 99.9%* |

*Not 100% due to rounding errors

breakdown of the sample in percentages. The ethnic representation varies from the city and district population in several ways. Hispanics and Asians are under-represented in this sample and Blacks are slightly over-represented by population. Although the reasons for this are speculative, several factors are no doubt contributing. First, the loss of the primary, bilingual interviewer caused a loss of Hispanic families in the sample interviewed. Second, Blacks have historically been over-represented in special education classrooms. Although a great deal has been done to change that situation, it is possible that Blacks may still be slightly over-represented in this population. Finally, although Asian families are under-represented in this sample, the percentage may reflect the reality. San Diego has a large and growing population of newly-arrived Asian families. Because of the diversity of the cultural and linguistic backgrounds in the group, these students tend to be placed in Bilingual classrooms. At this time those children have not yet been identified as needing special education services. That identification, when necessary, will come only after their basic language needs have been served.

In the following sections findings will be presented for each of the research questions in both narrative and tabular form. Items will be abbreviated in the tables to conserve space.

Research Question 1

Question 1: To what extent do lower socioeconomic parents of special education students participate in school site activities?

Data presented in Table V indicate that slightly more than a third of the families surveyed had attended a meeting at school in the past year. That percentage increased to 75% when asked about their attendance at a school meeting over the past two years. Nearly half of the parents had observed in their child's classroom. When asked whether or not they had observed in their child's classroom, 14% of the families added a response category. These 14% felt that observation would be inappropriate. This response was given by parents of students in high school programs and in programs for older, learning handicapped youngsters where the students themselves would object to parental observations.

Table VI, Table VII, and Table VIII present parent responses to those same questions by age of student, primary program category, and ethnicity. (Ethnicity tables throughout the document will be reported using only Hispanic, White, and Black since only one family in the Asian-Pacific Islander and one family in the Filipino categories was interviewed.)

TABLE V

PERCENT OF PARENTS PARTICIPATING IN SCHOOL SITE ACTIVITIES

| Item | Yes | | No | | Not Sure/ Don't Know | | Inappropriate * | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | % | N | % | N | % | N | % | N |
| Participated in P.T.A., P.T.O., P.S.T.A.; or other parent group meeting in the past year | 34 | 36 | 58 | 62 | 8 | 8 | - | - |
| Attended a meeting or activity for parents at any of your children's schools during the past two years | 75 | 79 | 24 | 26 | 1 | 1 | - | - |
| Ever observed in your child's classroom | 45 | 48 | 38 | 40 | 3 | 3 | 14 | 15 |

*This category was added to the last question listed by 14% of the respondents. Their children were generally adolescents in programs for Learning Handicapped students where a visit by parents would be viewed as embarrassing.

TABLE VI

PERCENT OF PARTICIPATION BY AGE OF STUDENT

| Item | Age 2-5 Yes | Total N | Age 6-11 Yes | Total N | Age 12-13 Yes | Total N | Age 14-20 Yes | Total N |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Participated in P.T.A., P.T.O., P.S.T.A., or other parent group meeting in the past year | 20% | 6 | 56% | 16 | 32% | 19 | 32% | 41 |
| Attended a meeting or activity for parents at any of your children's schools during the past two years | 71% | 7 | 82% | 17 | 65% | 20 | 77% | 44 |
| Ever observed in your child's classroom | 57% | 7 | 93% | 15 | 43% | 14 | 36% | 36 |

TABLE VII

PERCENT OF PARTICIPATION BY PRIMARY PROGRAM CATEGORY

| Item | LH Yes | LH Total N | CH Yes | CH Total N | PH Yes | PH Total N | SH Yes | SH Total N |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Participated in P.T.A., P.T.O., P.S.T.A., or other parent group meeting in the past year | 29% | 42 | 67% | 3 | 38% | 16 | 42% | 36 |
| Attended a meeting or activity for parents at any of your children's schools during the past two years | 73% | 45 | 67% | 3 | 77% | 17 | 77% | 39 |
| Ever observed in your child's classroom | 18% | 33 | 67% | 3 | 67% | 15 | 81% | 36 |

TABLE VIII

PERCENT OF PARTICIPATION BY ETHNICITY

| Item | Hispanic | | White | | Black | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Yes | Total N | Yes | Total N | Yes | Total N |
| Participated in P.T.A., P.T.O., P.S.T.A., or other parent group meeting in the past year | 55% | 11 | 38% | 64 | 29% | 21 |
| Attended a meeting or activity for parents at any of your children's schools during the past two years | 58% | 12 | 78% | 69 | 77% | 22 |
| Ever observed in your child's classroom | 70% | 10 | 56% | 57 | 47% | 19 |

These findings appear to indicate that parents are most involved during the child's elementary school years (ages 6-11) with school site involvement decreasing as the child gets older. It also appears that parents of students in programs for the communicatively handicapped, physically handicapped, and severely handicapped participate more in school site activities than parents of students in learning handicapped programs. And, in general, responses from Hispanic and White families indicated that they participated more frequently in school site activities than Black families.

Although the exact reasons for these differences cannot be explained from the data, several can be hypothesized from the anecdotal data that was recorded on some forms. Parents are most involved during the early school years. This seems to be true in all areas of education and may reflect the students' wishes that parents become less visible during the adolescent years. In special education it may also reflect "parent burnout." After so many years of working for adequate programs and services for their children, parents get tired and become less involved. The higher rate of participation among parents of students with more severe handicaps is a finding which makes sense from a programmatic perspective. The more severely handicapped a child is, the more the home and school goals will overlap, i.e. the skills being taught in the home will be similar to those taught at school. Differences in participation in school site activities by ethnicity may be accounted for by Black parents' general feelings of being negatively treated by school personnel.

Research Question 2

Question 2: To what extent do lower socioeconomic parents of special education students participate in educational decision-making for their child?

Tables IX, X, XI, and XII provide information on parents' perceptions of their involvement in educational decision-making. Approximately two-thirds of the parents interviewed felt that their rights were clearly explained, that they had been active participants in the IEP, and that they worked with the teacher in accomplishing the IEP goals and objectives. However, of the 62% who viewed themselves as active participants in the IEP, only 44% actually made suggestions regarding their child's special education placement. Ninety-two percent reported that they had signed and received a copy of their child's IEP; 3% said they had not; and 5 percent weren't sure or didn't know.

TABLE IX

PERCENT AND NUMBER OF PARENTS WHO PERCEIVED THEMSELVES AS ACTIVE PARTICIPANTS IN EDUCATIONAL DECISION-MAKING

| Item | Yes | | No | | Not Sure/ Don't Know | | Inappropriate | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | % | N | % | N | % | N | % | N |
| Rights explained in clear and understandable manner | 67 | 71 | 29 | 31 | 4 | 4 | - | - |
| Active participant in IEP meeting | 62 | 66 | 30 | 32 | 8 | 8 | - | - |
| Offered suggestions about placement at IEP meeting (those answering "yes" to preceding item) | 44 | 47 | 40 | 42 | 5 | 5 | 11 | 12 |
| Work together with teacher to accomplish IEP goals and objectives | 61 | 65 | 31 | 33 | 8 | 8 | - | - |
| Signed and received copy of IEP | 92 | 97 | 3 | 3 | 5 | 6 | - | - |

TABLE X

PERCENT OF PARENTS WHO VIEWED THEMSELVES AS ACTIVE PARTICIPANTS IN EDUCATIONAL DECISION-MAKING BY AGE OF STUDENT

| Item | C.A. 2-5 Yes | C.A. 2-5 Total N | C.A. 6-11 Yes | C.A. 6-11 Total N | C.A. 12-13 Yes | C.A. 12-13 Total N | C.A. 14-20 Yes | C.A. 14-20 Total N |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Rights explained in clear and understandable manner | 67% | 6 | 81% | 16 | 68% | 19 | 64% | 44 |
| Active participant in IEP meeting | 67% | 6 | 82% | 17 | 58% | 19 | 61% | 41 |
| Offered suggestions about placement at IEP meeting (those answering "yes" to preceding item) | 33% | 6 | 63% | 16 | 41% | 17 | 50% | 36 |
| Work together with teacher to accomplish IEP goals and objectives | 67% | 6 | 82% | 17 | 67% | 18 | 55% | 40 |
| Signed and received copy of IEP | 86% | 7 | 94% | 17 | 95% | 19 | 100% | 42 |

TABLE XI

PERCENT OF PARENTS WHO VIEWED THEMSELVES AS ACTIVE PARTICIPANTS IN EDUCATIONAL DECISION-MAKING BY PRIMARY PROGRAM CATEGORY

| Item | LH Yes | LH Total N | CH Yes | CH Total N | PH Yes | PH Total N | SH Yes | SH Total N |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Rights explained in clear and understandable manner | 74% | 43 | 67% | 3 | 75% | 16 | 62% | 39 |
| Active participant in IEP meeting | 59% | 41 | 67% | 3 | 67% | 15 | 77% | 39 |
| Offered suggestions about placement at IEP meeting (those who answered "yes" to preceding question) | 49% | 37 | 50% | 2 | 54% | 13 | 58% | 36 |
| Work together with teachers to accomplish IEP goals and objectives | 50% | 42 | 50% | 2 | 79% | 14 | 80% | 39 |
| Signed and received copy of IEP | 100% | 42 | 100% | 3 | 80% | 15 | 100% | 39 |

TABLE XII

PERCENT OF PARENTS WHO VIEWED THEMSELVES AS ACTIVE PARTICIPANTS IN EDUCATIONAL DECISION-MAKING BY ETHNICITY

| Item | Hispanic Yes | Hispanic Total N | White Yes | White Total N | Black Yes | Black Total N |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Rights explained in clear and understandable manner | 56% | 9 | 73% | 69 | 64% | 22 |
| Active participant in IEP meeting | 64% | 11 | 72% | 65 | 57% | 21 |
| Offered suggestions about placement at IEP meeting (those who answered "yes" to preceding question) | 30% | 10 | 58% | 60 | 44% | 18 |
| Work together with teachers to accomplish IEP goals and objectives | 60% | 10 | 69% | 67 | 63% | 19 |
| Signed and received copy of IEP | 90% | 10 | 99% | 67 | 95% | 21 |

Findings in Table X indicate that parents of students six through eleven years of age report that they view themselves as active participants in educational decision-making with higher frequency than any other age group. They reported a better understanding of their rights, more active participation in the IEP meeting, made more suggestions at the IEP meeting, and work together with teachers more than any other group. Interestingly, parents of adolescents report less participation in educational decision-making but a greater percentage of them reported signing and receiving a copy of the IEP.

Major differences in parents' perceptions of their participation in educational decision-making were not apparent among primary program categories (Table XI). Parents of severely handicapped students did report the greatest participation in IEP meetings. Parents of physically handicapped and severely handicapped students reported considerably higher degrees of parent-teacher cooperation in working on goals and objectives than did parents of learning handicapped and communicatively handicapped students.

As indicated in Table XII, White/Anglo parents reported the highest levels of participation in educational decision-making; Black parents were next except for active participation in IEP meetings; and Hispanic families reported the least involvement. Although there are differences across groups, one-half to three-fourths of the parents interviewed reported that they participated in educational decision-making for their child.

Research Question 3

Question 3: Is there a difference in the level of participation of lower socioeconomic parents which relates to the type of special education placement?

The relationship of special education placement to parent participation has been presented in the findings under Research Questions 1 and 2 and will be further elaborated in Research Question 5. Please refer to those sections.

Research Question 4

Question 4: Is there a difference in level of participation of lower socioeconomic parents of special education and non-special education students?

Comparison data from parents of students in regular education was taken from Teacher Corps' concurrent study of 482 parents in the same elementaries, junior high, and high schools used in this study. Table XIII compares the responses of parents in the regular and special education samples related to participation in school site activities. Because of the report format of the Teacher Corps data, only percentages are reported without absolute numbers. It is clear that parents of special education students reported greater participation in school site activities in all categories except examination of their child's records. Although the data is not included in the table, it is important to note that over 80% of both the regular and special education respondents indicated that they would feel "comfortable" or "very comfortable" contacting the school about their child.

Research Question 5

Question 5: What barriers to participation are identified by lower socioeconomic parents of special education students?

Parents who had not participated in P.T.A., P.T.O., P.S.T.A., or other parent group meetings were asked to indicate what changes needed to be made so that they would be willing to come. Their responses can be found in Table XIV. Fifty percent of the parents interviewed said that they were unable to participate the last time they were invited to attend a school event or activity. The reasons given most frequently for not attending are listed in Table XV. Parents were asked to identify the barriers that they encounter when they attempt to participate in their child's educational program. These barriers are listed in Table XVI.

It is apparent from Tables XIV, XV, and XVI that parents were able to identify specific problems that interfere with their participation in school activities and their responses were consistent across questions. Not depicted in tabular form but worth noting are the differences in barriers cited by different ethnic/cultural groups. Although lack of time was at the top of the list, Black families cited communication problems which included discourteousness, lack of respect, and lack of openness on the part of the school. Mexican-American families did not report communication problems, but also mentioned lack of time as the most serious barrier. A large percentage of White parents reported that things were going well but others identified work schedules, time, and lack of communication from teachers as serious problems.

TABLE XIII

COMPARISON OF PARTICIPATION BY PARENTS OF REGULAR AND SPECIAL EDUCATION STUDENTS IN SCHOOL SITE ACTIVITIES

| Item | Percentage of Participation By Regular Education Parents | Percentage of Participation By Special Ed. Parents |
|---|---|---|
| Participated in P.T.A., P.T.O., P.S.T.A., or other parent group meeting in the past year | 23% | 34% |
| Attended a meeting or activity for parents in past two years | 57% | 75% |
| Ever observed in your child's classroom | 20% | 45% |
| Aware that child's school records are available | 75% | 84% |
| Have examined school records (if "yes" to preceding question) | 39% | 37% |

TABLE XIV

CHANGES THAT NEED TO BE MADE TO GET PARENTS TO ATTEND SCHOOL MEETINGS

| Change Suggested | Rank Order* |
|---|---|
| Meetings held at different time | 1 |
| Transportation needed | 2 |
| Advance notice of meetings | 3 |

*(No. 1 was mentioned most often.)

TABLE XV

REASONS GIVEN FOR NOT ATTENDING MOST RECENT SCHOOL EVENT OR ACTIVITY

| Reason | Rank Order* |
|---|---|
| Work schedule | 1 |
| Inconvenient time | 2 |
| Too many responsibilities at home | 3 |
| Transportation problems | 4 |

*(No. 1 was mentioned most often.)

TABLE XVI

BARRIERS MOST FREQUENTLY
IDENTIFIED BY PARENTS

| Barriers |
| --- |
| Communication Problems |
| Transportation Problems |
| Babysitting Problems |
| Lack of Time |
| Lack of Understanding of the System |
| Feelings of Inferiority |
| Feeling That Problems Won't Be Resolved |
| Language/Cultural Differences |
| Realistically Facing the Child's Disability |

Research Question 6

Question 6: What barriers to parent participation are identified by special education teachers?

The demographic characteristics of the teachers who were interviewed are depicted in Tables XVII, XVIII, XIX, and XX. When asked to identify barriers encountered by parents when they attempt to participate in their child's education program, teachers tended to judge parents negatively (see Table XXI). Parents' lack of time and energy, apathy, lack of understanding and judgment were ranked one, two, and three; and the school's technical approach and lack of valuing of parental input were ranked fourth and fifth. It is obvious in comparing teacher identified barriers to parent identified barriers that a major discrepancy exists between parent and teacher perceptions.

Research Question 7

Question 7: What strategies or activities do lower socioeconomic parents of special education students recommend to increase parent/school/community communication and participation?

Parents were asked to suggest ways in which the school could help them overcome the major barrier to participation that they had identified. Their suggestions can be found in Table XXII. The majority of parents either weren't sure what schools could do to help or felt that there was nothing that the schools could do. Others provided specific suggestions that related to improving communication, changing meeting times, and providing transportation. These ideas are elaborated in a handbook for school personnel developed by the project titled, But I've Tried Everything! A Special Educator's Guide to Working With Parents.

Finally, it should be noted that parents responded very favorably to the interviews. Ninety-three percent felt that it had been worth their time, and 88% said that its value or helpfulness to them had been good to excellent. Finally, 62% of the parents interviewed indicated that they would be interested in working with other parents and school staff in studying the results and planning programs to improve home-school communication.

TABLE XVII

SEX OF TEACHERS INTERVIEWED

| Sex | Number | Percent |
|---|---|---|
| Male | 21 | 36% |
| Female | 38 | 64% |

TABLE XVIII

YEARS OF TEACHING EXPERIENCE

| Teaching Experience | Years | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1-3 | 4-10 | 11-15 | 16-20 | 21-28+ |
| Years taught | 18 | 18 | 10 | 4 | 7 |
| Years taught in Spec. Ed. | 21 | 23 | 8 | 4 | 1 |

TABLE XIX

NUMBER OF TEACHERS BY PROGRAM CATEGORY

| Program Category | Number | % |
|---|---|---|
| Learning Handicapped (LH) | 8 | 14 |
| LH Special Day Class | 3 | 5 |
| LH Resource Specialist | 2 | 3 |
| Communicatively Handicapped | 0 | 0 |
| Physically Handicapped (PH) | 4 | 7 |
| PH Special Day Class | 2 | 3 |
| Severely Handicapped (SH) | 8 | 14 |
| Autistic | 0 | 0 |
| Development Center | 10 | 17 |
| Severely Emotionally Disturbed | 14 | 24 |
| Trainable Mentally Retarded | 6 | 10 |
| Missing | 2 | 3 |
| Total | 59 | 100% |

TABLE XX

ETHNICITY OF TEACHERS

| Ethnicity | Number | % |
|---|---|---|
| Hispanic | 2 | 3 |
| White | 49 | 83 |
| Black | 2 | 3 |
| Asian-Pacific Islander | 1 | 2 |
| American Indian | 1 | 2 |
| Missing Data | 4 | 7 |
| Total | 59 | 100% |

TABLE XXI

BARRIERS TO PARENTAL PARTICIPATION
IDENTIFIED BY TEACHERS

| Barrier | Rank Order* |
|---|---|
| Parents Lack of Time and Energy | 1 |
| Parents are Apathetic | 2 |
| Parents Lack of Understanding and Judgment | 3 |
| School is too Technical | 4 |
| School Doesn't Value Parents' Input | 5 |

*(No. 1 was named most frequently.)

TABLE XXII

PARENT SUGGESTIONS FOR OVERCOMING BARRIERS

| Suggestion | Rank Order* |
|---|---|
| Not sure, don't know | 1 |
| Schools can't help | 2 |
| More and better communication from teachers | 3 |
| Activities in evenings or at different times | 4 |
| Provide transportation | 5 |

*(No. 1 was mentioned most often.)

# SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

## Summary of Major Findings

The major findings of this study are summarized below:

(1) Parents of students with learning handicaps participate less than parents of students with physical handicaps or severe handicaps.

(2) Approximately two-thirds of the parents in the sample reported that they were actively involved in making educational decisions about their child. Parents of children age six through eleven reported the most involvement.

(3) Compared to a sample of parents whose children are in regular education, parents of students receiving special education services partipate more in school site activities and in educational decision-making.

(4) Barriers to participation identified by parents varied slightly with ethnicity but most barriers were consistent across all groups.

(5) There were major discrepancies between the barriers to parental participation identified by parents and those identified by teachers.

## Conclusions and Recommendations

The findings of this study suggest that the majority of lower socioeconomic status parents of students receiving special education services are interested in participating in their child's school program and in working more closely with teachers and school personnel. The barriers that they identify are encountered by all people but are intensified in low-income, culturally diverse families which have a handicapped child. Some of the barriers cannot be overcome by the school, but many others can be broken down through improved teacher training and inservice, creative administration, and a change of attitude about parents. The reduction of the discrepancy between parent and teacher perceptions of barriers is necessary first step to change. Based upon these findings, the recommendations listed below are submitted to the State Department of Education for consideration.

1. The handbook, But I've Tried Everything! A Special Educator's Guide to Working With Parents, should be expanded into workbook form.

2. A three to five hour workshop for teachers and administrators should be developed based on the above products, field tested, evaluated, modified, and packaged for inservice training of staff.

3. Inservice trainers throughout the state should be trained in the delivery of the workshop.

4. In the interim, the handbook itself should be widely disseminated to sensitize school personnel to the real difficulties experienced by parents in their attempts to participate in school activities.

In conclusion, the parents and teachers who participated in this study have already taken the first step toward improved home-school communication. It is important that this momentum be maintained and shared throughout the state before the walls separating home and school get higher.

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# APPENDICES

# APPENDIX A

## TEACHER CORPS PARENT INTERVIEW FORM

The questions I will be asking you are concerned with such things as contacts between you and the school, homework, the part parents play in their children's education, parent participation in school activities, and your feelings about your child's school.

We hope that you will say what you really think. Please remember - your ideas and opinions will be kept strictly confidential. There are no "right" or "wrong" answers.

Some of the questions mention the words "your child." In answering these questions, please think of your child who is in the _____ grade at _____.

Q.1. First of all - during this school year, by which of the following ways have persons at school contacted you personally about your child? By phone, by note or letter, by home visit, or there was no contact?

[1. PHONE] [2. NOTE OR LETTER] [3. HOME VISIT] [4. NO CONTACT]

Q.2. Have you heard personally this school year from your child's teacher or teachers? Do not include report cards or grade reports.

[1. YES] [2. NO] [9. NS/DK]

Q.3. During this school year, have you talked to or written to your child's teacher or teachers?

[1. YES] [2. NO] [9. NS/DK]

Q.4. When people at school talk to you or write to you, which of the following are reasons for the personal contact?

| | YES | NO | NS/DK |
|---|---|---|---|
| a. To give you information about school programs or activities? | 1 | 2 | 9 |
| b. To report a learning problem your child is having? | 1 | 2 | 9 |
| c. To share some good things about your child? | 1 | 2 | 9 |
| d. To ask for help with school activities? | 1 | 2 | 9 |
| e. To ask you to be a classroom volunteer or tutor? | 1 | 2 | 9 |
| f. To report a behavior or attendance problem? | 1 | 2 | 9 |

Q.5. Of the reasons I mentioned which is most often the reason for the personal contact?

[1. a] [2. b] [3. c] [4. d] [5. e] [6. f]

Q.6. Have you been invited to observe(watch) classroom teaching in your child's school?

[1. YES] [2. NO] [9. NS/DK]

Q.7.a. Have you ever observed classroom teaching in your child's school?

[1. YES] [2. NO] [9. NS/DK]

Q 7.b. [IF NO OR NS/DK], would you be interested in observing classroom teaching in your child's school?

[1. YES] [2. NO] [9. NS/DK]

Q.8.a. Most teachers have planned specific goals or objectives for their students to reach by the end of the school year.

Have school persons informed you about the goals or objectives for your child for this school year?

[1. YES] [2. NO] [9. NS/DK]

Q.8.b. [IF NO OR NS/DK], how important would you say it is to know what those goals or objectives are? Very important, important, or not very important at all?

[1. VERY IMPORTANT] [2. IMPORTANT] [3. NOT VERY IMPORTANT] [9. NS/DK]

Q.9.a. Do you understand all of the different kinds of information written on your child's report card or grade report?

[1. YES] [2. NO]

Q.9.b. [IF NO], what, specifically, do you have the most difficulty with?

[PROBE FOR TWO]

a. _____

b. _____

Q.10. Do you talk over your child's report card with your child?

[1. YES] [2. NO]

Q.11. How often would you like to receive information from a teacher concerning your child's progress in school?

a. _____

Q.12.a. Should all teacher-parent conferences be held during the teacher's working day?

[1. YES] [2. NO] [9. NS/DK]

Q.12.b. At which of the following times would you be willing to come to your child's school for a conference with the teacher? Before school begins in the morning? During the school day? Late afternoon? early evening? Saturday? PROBE FOR A "YES" OR "NO" ON EACH ANSWER

BEFORE SCHOOL IN THE MORNING | DURING THE SCHOOL DAY

LATE AFTERNOON | EARLY EVENING | SATURDAY

Q.13. Does your child's school have a Parent Teacher Association(PTA) or Parent Student Teacher Association(PSTA)?

1. YES | 2. NO | 9. NS/DK

Q.14.a. Have you participated in PTA or PSTA activities for parents this school year?

1. YES | 2. NO

Q.14.b. IF NO, what changes need to be made so that you would be willing to come to the meetings or activities?

a. _____

b. _____

Q.15.a. Do School Bulletins or Newsletters give you the kinds of information you want to get?

1. YES | 2. NO | 3. I DON'T READ THEM

Q.15.b. IF NO, what other kinds of information do you want to get?

PROBE FOR TWO

a. _____

b. _____

Q.16. How satisfied is your child with the school as a place to learn? Is your child very satisfied? Satisfied? Not satisfied? Or hasn't said very much about it?

1. VERY SATISFIED | 2. SATISFIED | 3. NOT SATISFIED

4. HASN'T SAID MUCH ABOUT IT

Q.17. Do you feel that your child's school helps your child to make friends easily?

1. YES | 2. NO | 9. NS/DK

Q.18. Does your child's school have a tutoring program for students who need individual help?

1. YES | 2. NO | 9. NS/DK

Q.19.a. How much do you agree or disagree with the rules or policy of your child's school for handling discipline? Do you agree strongly, agree, disagree, or disagree strongly?

[1. AGREE STRONGLY] [2. AGREE] [3. DISAGREE] [4. DISAGREE STRONGLY]

Q.19.b. [IF DISAGREE OR DISAGREE STRONGLY], what specific suggestions do you have as to how your child's school should handle discipline. [PROBE FOR TWO]

a. _____

b. _____

Q.20. What would you like to see your child's school doing for children that you feel it is not doing now? [PROBE FOR TWO]

a. _____

b. _____

Q.21. Is your child learning about peoples' careers and the kind of work people do to earn a living?

[1. YES] [2. NO] [3. NS/DK]

Q.22. Many students and parents are asking for a kind of education that prepares students for living and working successfully and responsibly in our society. How successful is your child's program in meeting this request? Is it very successful? Successful? Not very successful?

[1. VERY SUCCESSFUL] [2. SUCCESSFUL] [3. NOT VERY SUCCESSFUL]

[9. NS/DK]

Q.23. How successful do you feel your child's school is in helping all students to learn? For example, how successful is the school with the following groups of students?

| | Very Succ. | Somewhat Succ. | Not Very Succ. | NS/ |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| a. Students who learn more slowly | 1 | 2 | 3 | 9 |
| b. Students learning English as a Second Language | 1 | 2 | 3 | 9 |
| c. Students with emotional/ behavioral difficulties | 1 | 2 | 3 | 9 |
| d. Students who have ability to learn more quickly | 1 | 2 | 3 | 9 |
| e. Students who have hearing or vision handicaps | 1 | 2 | 3 | 9 |
| f. Students who have average ability | 1 | 2 | 3 | 9 |
| g. Students from minority ethnic backgrounds | 1 | 2 | 3 | 9 |
| h. Students with physical handicaps | 1 | 2 | 3 | 9 |

Q.24.a. Did you know that records of your child's progress in school are available to you for review and discussion?

1. YES 2. NO

Q.24.b. IF YES, have you ever examined your child's records at school?

1. YES 2. NO

Q.25.a. Is your child learning as well as you think your child should learn at school?

1. YES 2. NO 9. NS/DK

Q.25.b. IF NO, what specific things do you feel should be done to help your child learn better? PROBE FOR THREE

a. _____

b. _____

c. _____

Q.26.a. Is your child being taught any kinds of knowledge or behavior in school which conflicts or differs with what you are teaching him/her at home?

1. YES 2. NO

Q.26.b. IF YES, would you mention some of the differences? PROBE FOR TWO

a. _____

b. _____

Q.27. Do you feel that your child should learn more at school about the cultures of different ethnic groups?

1. YES 2. NO 9. NS/DK

Q.28.a. Would you like to learn more about the cultures of other ethnic groups?

1. YES 2. NO

Q.28.b. IF YES, which particular cultures would you like to learn more about?

a. _____

b. _____

Q.29. Does your child's teacher expect students to do homework, school assignments or projects at home?

1. YES 2. NO 9. NS/DK

Q.30.a. Does your child bring home books or materials to study?

[1. YES] [2. NO]

Q.30.b. [IF NO], what do you feel are the reasons that the child does not bring home books or materials to study? [PROBE FOR TWO]

a. _____

b. _____

Q.31. How often does your child read books or paperbacks which the child has picked out on his or her own? Very often, sometimes, or not very often?

[1. VERY OFTEN] [2. SOMETIMES] [3. NOT VERY OFTEN] [9. NS/DK]

Q.32. How many days during the week does your child do homework or school assignments at home?

a. _____

Q.33. Does your child seem to understand the homework or assignments he/she brings home? Does the child understand - usually, sometimes or not very often?

[1. USUALLY] [2. SOMETIMES] [3. NOT VERY OFTEN] [9. NS/DK]

Q.34. Do you think that your child benefits from the homework that is assigned?

[1. YES] [2. NO] [9. NS/DK]

Q.35. Are there family members in the home who can help your child with the homework assignments?

[1. YES] [2. NO] [9. NS/DK]

Q.36. Is there a regular place where your child can study at home?

[1. YES] [2. NO] [9. NS/DK]

Q.37. Are there rules in your home about watching television when there is homework to be done?

[1. YES] [2. NO] [9. NS/DK]

Q.38. Do you look for television programs which support or enrich your child's school program?

[1. YES] [2. NO] [9. NS/DK]

Q.39.a. Do you feel your child may have any of the following health problems which could be affecting his/her learning in school?

[1. HEARING] [2. VISION] [3. NUTRITION] [4. USE OF DRUGS ALCOHOL, NARCOTICS]

Q.39.a. Has your child been absent from school in the past 4 or 5 weeks?

[1. YES] [2. NO]

[IF NO, SKIP TO Q. 40]

Q.39.b. [IF YES], how many days was your child absent?

a. ____

Q.39.c. Were the absences due to any of the following reasons: illness? injury? child didn't want to go to school? family business? child overslept? medical/dental appointment? Other reasons?

[1. ILLNESS] [5. OVERSLEPT]

[2. INJURY] [6. MEDICAL/DENTAL APPOINTMENT]

[3. DIDN'T WANT TO GO] [7. OTHER/ Specify: _____]

[4. FAMILY BUSINESS]

Q.40. How often do you talk with your child about what happened at school? Almost everyday? Once a week or so? Not very often? When I think its necessary?

[1. ALMOST EVERY DAY] 3. [NOT VERY OFTEN]

[2. ONCE A WEEK OR SO] 4. [WHEN I THINK IT'S NECESSARY]

Q.41. How often do you ask about homework assignments or books or materials which you feel your child should be bringing home? Almost every day? Once a week or so? Not very often? When I think it's necessary?

[1. ALMOST EVERY DAY] 3. [NOT VERY OFTEN]

[2. ONCE A WEEK OR SO] 4. [WHEN I THINK IT'S NECESSARY]

Q.42. How many days in a month do you feel that your child could be absent before the absence affects the child's progress in school?

a. _____

Q.43. What do you feel are some of the responsibilities parents should take in helping the schools to educate their children? [PROBE FOR THREE]

a. _____

b. _____

c. _____

Q.44.a. The last time that people at school invited you to come to a school event or activity, were you able to come?

[1. YES] [2. NO]

Q.44.b. [IF NO], do you recall why you couldn't come? [PROBE FOR ONE]

a. _____

Q.45.a. Recently, many parents living in this area said that they were interested in attending parent meetings at school. But - very few people actually come to parent meetings.

Have you ever attended a meeting or activity for parents at any of your children's schools during the past two years?

[1. YES] [2. NO] [9. NS/DK]

[IF NO OR NS/DK, SKIP TO Q. 46.a.]

Q.45.b. People have told us many different things about parent meetings they have attended. From your experience with parent meetings, how much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

| | Agree STRONGLY | Agree | Disagree | Disagree STRONGLY | DK |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| a. Meetings were well-organized. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 9 |
| b. Leaders knew what they were doing. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 9 |
| c. Parents' ideas and opinions were listened to. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 9 |
| d. Provisions were made for parents with differing language backgrounds. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 9 |
| e. If problems came up, they were usually solved. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 9 |
| f. Leaders used words which parents could understand. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 9 |
| g. Everybody had a fair chance to talk. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 9 |
| h. Meetings dealt with topics parents wanted to hear about. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 9 |
| i. Parents were treated as adults. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 9 |
| j. Principal/vice principal was available to participate. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 9 |
| k. Teachers were available to participate. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 9 |

Q.45.c. What other descriptions would you add?

a. _____

Q.46.a. Do you feel that parents of each of the cultural groups represented at your child's school are equally welcome to participate in meetings and activities?

[1. YES] [2. NO] [9. NS/DK]

Q.46.b. IF NO, why do you feel they're not equally welcome?

a. _____

b. _____

Q.47.a. Do you feel that parents of the different cultural groups represented at your child's school communicate or work well together?

1. YES 2. NO 9. NS/DK

Q.47.b. IF NO, why do you feel they do not communicate or work well together?

a. _____

b. _____

Q.48.a. A large number of parents in this community area very seldom or never come to the different schools. How much do you agree or disagree that each of the following is a reason for parents not coming to school?

| | Agree STRONGLY | Agree | Disagree | Disagree STRONGLY | NS/DK |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| a. Parents don't have the time to come. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 9 |
| b. Programs for parents are not related to what parents want to hear about. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 9 |
| c. Parents are too tired raising a family and earning a living to come. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 9 |
| d. Children are against parents' coming to school. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 9 |
| e. Parents have an attitude that the schools are doing just fine. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 9 |
| f. No transportation to school. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 9 |
| g. A language/communication barrier. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 9 |
| h. Parents don't feel really welcome. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 9 |
| i. Little effort is made to find out what parents are concerned about. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 9 |
| j. Parents have an attitude that they shouldn't interfere with the school. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 9 |
| k. Parents feel they don't know enough to be able to participate. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 9 |
| l. Coming to school is not as important as other interests at home. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 9 |
| m. Parents feel that their child's education is the school's responsibility. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 9 |

Q.48.b. What other reasons would you add?

a. _____

Q.49. From which of the following do you get most/much, some, or little/none of the information which helps you form your ideas and opinions about your children's schools?

| | Most/Much | Some | Little/None |
|---|---|---|---|
| a. Your children | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| b. Listening to other children | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| c. Talking to persons at school | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| d. Talk in the neighborhood | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| e. Other parents | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| f. Newspapers/Magazines | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| g. School Bulletins/Newsletters | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| h. Relatives/Friends | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| i. Visiting or working in the school | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| j. Talking/listening where people often meet: church, clubs, on the street, stores, at work, etc. | 1 | 2 | 3 |

Q.50. What are your hopes, plans, or educational goals for your child? Finish high school; finish community college or a business or trade school; finish a four-year college; or leave school as soon as your child can get a job?

[1. HIGH SCHOOL] [2. C.C./BUS./TRADE SCHOOL]

[3. FOUR-YEAR COLLEGE] [4. LEAVE FOR JOB] [9. NS/DK]

Q.51. How much responsibility do you feel parents should take in helping their children select their classes in junior and senior high school?

[1. A GREAT DEAL] [2. SOME] [3. NONE AT ALL]

Q.52. [ASK ONLY IF CHILD IS IN GRADE SIX OR ABOVE] Do you feel that you have received from the school all of the information necessary to help you and your child decide which classes he/she should take in junior or senior high school?

[1. YES] [2. NO] [9. NS/DK]

Q.53. [ASK ONLY IF CHILD IS IN GRADE SIX OR ABOVE] How do you feel about the amount of responsibility the school allows for or gives you in helping your child select classes for junior or senior high school? That is, the amount of responsibility be increased, lessened, or is it about rig

[1. SHOULD BE INCREASED] [2. AMOUNT IS ABOUT RIGHT]

[3. AMOUNT SHOULD BE LESSENED]

Q.54.a. Some people have told us that, as students move on beyond second or third grade, parents seem to have fewer contacts with their school. For each of the following possible reasons, tell me whether you agree strongly, agree, disagree or disagree strongly.

| | Agree STRONGLY | Agree | Disagree | Disagree STRONGLY | NS DK |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| a. The school subjects are too difficult to understand. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 9 |
| b. Parents get tired of school contacts. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 9 |
| c. Parents feel children should be more on their own. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 9 |
| d. Parents are made to feel they are not important. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 9 |
| e. Teachers take less personal interest in their students. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 9 |
| f. Parents feel less able to help their children. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 9 |
| g. Children don't want parents coming to the school. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 9 |
| h. Children in the higher grades don't bring information on school programs and activities to the home. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 9 |
| i. Teachers & counselors at the junior and senior high have so many students to work with that they have little time to make parent contacts. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 9 |

Q.54.b. What other reasons would you add?

a. _____

Q.55.a. Have you had problems dealing with school personnel?

[1. YES] [2. NO] [9. NS/DK]

Q.55.b. IF YES Specifically, what do you feel could be done to make contacts with school personnel more satisfying for you. [PROBE FOR TWO]

a. _____

b. _____

Q.56.a. Did you enroll your child as a new student at least two months or more after the regular school year had begun?

[1. YES] [2. NO]

[IF NO, SKIP TO Q. 57.]

Q.56.b. IF YES, what specific things did persons at the school do to help you or your child feel good about your new school? PROBE FOR TWO

a. _____

b. _____

Q.56.c. Is there anything which should have been done which wasn't done to help you or your child feel good about your new school?

a. _____

b. _____

Q.57. If you felt that your child was not learning well enough in school, would you know how to get help for your child?

1. YES 2. NO 9. NS/DK

Q.58. If your school asked for your ideas in solving some of the problems it faces, do you feel that your ideas would be respected and considered fairly?

1. YES 2. NO 9. NS/DK

Q.59. Do you feel that your child's school is interested in sharing its problems with you?

1. YES 2. NO 9. NS/DK

Q.60.a. Some people in the community area have told us that they are very much concerned that too many students are absent from school without an acceptable reason or they "skip" classes without permission. Do you feel that absenteeism and truancy are serious problems, somewhat serious problems, or not-at-all serious problems?

1. SERIOUS PROBLEMS 2. SOMEWHAT SERIOUS PROBLEMS

3. NOT-AT-ALL SERIOUS PROBLEMS 9. NS/DK

Q.60.b. Why do you think so many students are absent without an acceptable reason or "skip" classes without permission? PROBE FOR THREE

a. _____

b. _____

c. _____

Q.61.a. If you felt that your child needed a different teacher at school, would you try to have the change made?

1. YES 2. NO 9. NS/DK

Q.61.b. IF YES, What do you think the chances would be of having the change made? very good chance, average chance, very little chance?

1. VERY GOOD | 2. AVERAGE | 3. VERY LITTLE | 9. [illegible]

Q.62. How comfortable would you feel in contacting the school about your child? Very comfortable, comfortable, not very comfortable, or would not contact the school?

1. VERY COMFORTABLE | 2. COMFORTABLE | 3. NOT VERY COMFORTABLE | 4. WOULDN'T CONTACT SCHOOL

Q.63. If you have had contacts with the following persons working at your child's school, how satisfied were you with those contacts? Very satisfied, satisfied, not satisfied, or had no contact?

| | Very Satisf'd | Satisf'd | Not Satisf'd | No Cont. |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Child's teacher | 1 | 2 | 3 | 9 |
| 2. Principal | 1 | 2 | 3 | 9 |
| 3. Vice principal | 1 | 2 | 3 | 9 |
| 4. Secretary/Office Staff | 1 | 2 | 3 | 9 |
| 5. School Nurse | 1 | 2 | 3 | 9 |
| 6. School Counselor | 1 | 2 | 3 | 9 |
| 7. Custodians | 1 | 2 | 3 | 9 |
| 8. Other Parents | 1 | 2 | 3 | 9 |
| 9. Community Aide | 1 | 2 | 3 | 9 |
| 10. Instructional Aide | 1 | 2 | 3 | 9 |

Q.64. Do you think this interview has been worth the time you have given to it?

1. YES | 2. PROBABLY | 3. NO | 9. NS/DK

Q.65. In terms of its value or helpfulness to you, how would you rate the interview? Was it excellent, good, fair, or poor?

1. EXCELLENT | 2. GOOD | 3. FAIR | 4. POOR

Q.66. Would you like us to share with you the results of all the parent interviews?

1. YES | 2. NO

Q.67. Would you be willing to work with other parents and school persons in studying the results of the interviews and in planning programs to improve home-school communication?

1. YES | 2. NO | NS/DK

Developed exclusively for
San Diego Teacher Corps Pro
Morrow Stough, Ph.D
April 28, 1980

# APPENDIX B

## APPROVAL FROM S.D.S.U. COMMITTEE ON THE PROTECTION OF HUMAN SUBJECTS

COMMITTEE ON PROTECTION OF HUMAN SUBJECTS
SAN DIEGO STATE UNIVERSITY
SAN DIEGO, CA 92182

(714) 265-6622

August 13, 1980

Dr. Eleanor W. Lynch
Special Education Dept.
San Diego State University
San Diego, CA 92182

SUBJECT: Study #80-7-6F, "Barriers to Full Participation of Lower Socioeconomic Parents of Special Education Students in School Activities"

Dear Dr. Lynch:

The Parent Interview Schedule has been reviewed and approved by the Committee. Please place the Teacher Interview Schedule on file when it is completed.

Dr. Alan Litrownik, Chairperson
Committee on Protection of Human Subjects

AL:REL/jv

cc: Special Education Dept.
SDSU Foundation

# APPENDIX C

## PARENT INTERVIEW FORM

# PARENT INTERVIEW SCHEDULE



I am going to be asking you some questions about your child's special education program and your role in it.

We hope that you will say what you really think. Please remember that your ideas and opinions will be kept strictly confidential. There are no "right" or "wrong" answers.

When we are mentioning your child, we are referring to_____.

---

IF NOT PRE-CODED, MARK QUESTIONS 1 THROUGH 6. QUESTION AS NECESSARY.

---

1. Interviewee

   1. Mother  2. Father  3. Other

2. Child's chronological age

   a._____

3. Child's school

   1. Hoover  2. Wilson  3. Adams  4. Euclid

   5. Barton  6. Fairhaven  7. Mission Beach

   8. Revere  9. Riley  10. Schweitzer

4. Child's primary program category

| 1. LH | 2. CH | 3. PH | 4. SH | 9. NS/DK |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| a. Special Day Class | | a. Special Day Class | a. Autistic | |
| b. Resource Spec. | | b. D.I.S. | b. Dev.Hand. | |
| | | | c. S.E.D. | |
| | | | d. T.M.R. | |

5. Child's ethnic code

   1. Hispanic  2. White  3. Black  4. Asian or Pac. Islander

   5. Amer. Ind. or Alaskan  6. Portuguese  7. Filipino  8. Indochinese

6. School lunch program

   1. Eligible  2. Not Eligible  9. NS/DK

7. During this past school year, by which of the following ways have persons at school contacted you personally about your child?

| 1. PHONE | 2. NOTE OR LETTER | 3. HOME VISIT |
|---|---|---|
| 1. Yes 2. No | 1. Yes 2. No | 1. Yes 2. No |
| 3. NS/DK | 3. NS/DK | |

8. Have you heard personally this school year from your child's teacher or teachers?

| 1. Yes | 2. No | 9. NS/DK |
|---|---|---|

9. During this school year, have you talked to or written to your child's teacher or teachers?

| 1. Yes | 2. No | 9. NS/DK |
|---|---|---|

10. When people at school talk to you or write to you, which of the following are reasons for the personal contact?

| | YES | NO | OCCASION-ALLY | NS/DK |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| a. To give you information about school programs or activities? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 9 |
| b. To share some good things about your child? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 9 |
| c. To ask for help with school activities? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 9 |
| d. To ask you to be a classroom volunteer? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 9 |
| e. Or Tutor? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 9 |
| f. To report a behavior or attendance problem? | 1 | 3 | 3 | 9 |

11. Of the reasons I mentioned which is most often the reason for the personal contact?

1. a  2. b  3. c  4. d

5. e  6. f  9. NS/DK

12. Have you been invited to observe (watch) classroom teaching in your child's school?

1. Yes  2. No  9. NS/DK

13a. Have you ever observed in your child's classroom? If Yes, go to Question 14a

1. Yes  2. No  9. NS/DK

13b. IF NO, would you be interested in observing classroom teaching in your child's school?

1. Yes  2. No  9. NS/DK

14a. How often do you think your child's teacher should contact you?

1. Weekly  2. Monthly  3. When there is a problem

4. Other  9. NS/DK

14b. Do you have children in regular education? If YES, refer to question 14c.

1. Yes  2. No

14c. Do you want the same amount of contact for your children in regular special education?

1. Yes  2. No  9. NS/DK

15. At which of the following times would you be willing to come to your child's school for a conference with the teacher?

PROBE FOR A "YES" OR "NO" ON EACH ANSWER.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| BEFORE SCHOOL IN THE MORNING | 1. Yes | 2. No |
| DURING THE SCHOOL DAY | 1. Yes | 2. No |
| LATE AFTERNOON | 1. Yes | 2. No |
| EARLY EVENING | 1. Yes | 2. No |
| SATURDAY | 1. Yes | 2. No |

16. Do you think the district identified your child's needs as early as possible?

1. Yes  2. No  9. Not applicable, child's needs identified by other than school district

17. Were you contacted by the school district before your child was assessed for special education?

1. Yes  2. No  9. Not applicable

18. Were your rights explained to you in a clear and understandable manner?

1. Yes  2. No  9. NS/DK

19. How satisfied were you with the time taken from the time of identification to the actual time services were provided to your child?

1. Very Satisfied  2. Satisfied

3. Not Satisfied  9. NS/DK

20a. Do you feel you were an active participant in the development of the Individualized Education Program (I.E.P.)?

1. Yes IF YES, go to 20b  2. No  9. NS/DK

20b. At the time of the Individualized Education Program (I.E.P.) meeting, did you offer any suggestions about your child's placement in special education?

1. Yes IF YES, go to 20c  2. No  9. NS/DK

20c. Please explain your answer to 20b.

a._____

21a. Were the goals and objectives set for your child in the Individualized Education Program (I.E.P.) written in a clear and understandable manner?

1. Yes 2. No 9. NS/DK

21b. Do you and the teacher work together in accomplishing these goals and objectives?

1. Yes 2. No 9. NS/DK

21c. Were the goals and objectives written in such a manner that you can work on some of them at home?

1. Yes 2. No 9. NS/DK

22. Did you sign and receive a copy of your child's Individualized Education Program (IEP)?

1. Yes 2. No 9. NS/DK

23. In your opinion, is your child receiving all the special education services described in the Individualized Education Program (IEP)?

1. Yes, all 2. Yes, some

3. No, none 9. Do not know

24. If you were unable to attend the planning meeting, did the school suggest another meeting to ensure your participation in planning the Individualized Education Program (I.E.P.)?

1. Yes 2. No 9. Not applicable

25. In general, how would you rate the effectiveness of the professionals in your school district who make decisions regarding your child's special education program?

1. Very Effective 2. Somewhat Effective

3. Not Effective 9. NS/DK

26. How well do you feel your child has been accepted by the regular teaching staff who provide services for your child?

1. Poor acceptance
2. Average acceptance
3. Above average acceptance
4. Unable to determine
5. Not applicable - no regular Ed. services

27. How satisfied would you say you are with your child's current special education program.

1. Very Satisfied
2. Somewhat Satisfied
3. Neither Satisfied or Dissatisfied
4. Somewhat Dissatisfied
5. Very Dissatisfied
9. NS/DK

28a. Has your child been reassessed?

1. Yes (if Yes, go to 28b)
2. No
9. NS/DK

28b. Were you contacted by the school before your child was reassessed?

1. Yes
2. No

29. Does your child's school have a Parent Teacher Association (PTA), Parent Student Teacher Association (PSTA), or other parent group?

1. Yes
2. No
9. NS/DK

30a. Have you participated in any of those activities for parents this past school year?

1. Yes
2. No
9. NS/DK

30b. IF NO, what changes need to be made so that you would be willing to come to the meetings or activities? PROBE FOR TWO

a. _____

b. _____

31a. Do School Bulletins or Newsletters give you the kinds of information you want to get?

1. Yes  2. No  3. I do not read them

31b. IF NO, what other kinds of information do you want to get?

PROBE FOR TWO

a. _____

b. _____

32. How satisfied is your child with the school as a place to learn?

1. Very Satisfied  2. Satisfied  3. Not Satisfied

4. Has not said much about it

33. Do you feel that your child's school helps your child to make friends easily?

1. Yes  2. No  3. NS/DK

33a. How much do you agree or disagree with the rules or policy of your child's school for handling discipline?

1. Agree Strongly  2. Agree

3. Disagree  4. Disagree Strongly

33b. IF DISAGREE OR DISAGREE STRONGLY, what specific suggestions do you have as to how your child's school should handle discipline?
PROBE FOR TWO

a. _____

b. _____

34. Many students and parents are asking for a kind of education that prepares students to be a responsible member of society. How successful is your child's program?

1. Very Successful  2. Successful

3. Not Very Successful  9. NS/DK

35a. Did you know that records of your child's progress in school are available to you for review and discussion?

1. Yes 2. No 9. NS/DK

35b. IF YES, have you ever examined your child's records at school?

1. Yes 2. No 9. NS/DK

36a. Is your child being taught any kinds of knowledge or behavior in school which conflicts or differs with what you are teaching him/her at home?

1. Yes 2. No 9. NS/DK

36b. IF YES, would you mention some of the differences? PROBE FOR TWO

a. _____

b. _____

37a. How often does your child miss school during the school year?

1. Rarely 2. Occasionally

3. Often 4. NS/DK

37b. Were the absences due to any of the following reasons?

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Illness/Injury | 1. Yes | 2. No | 9. NS/DK |
| Did not want to go | 1. Yes | 2. No | 9. NS/DK |
| Family Business | 1. Yes | 2. No | 9. NS/DK |
| Overslept | 1. Yes | 2. No | 9. NS/DK |
| Medical/Dental Appointment | 1. Yes | 2. No | 9. NS/DK |
| Transportation Problems | 1. Yes | 2. No | 9. NS/DK |

38. How many days in a month do you feel that your child could be absent before the absence affects the child's progress in school?

a._____

39a. The last time that people at school invited you to come to a school event or activity, were you able to come?

1. Yes 2. No 9. NS/DK

39b. IF NO, do you recall why you could not come? PROBE FOR ONE

a._____

40a. Often, parents say that they are interested in attending parent meetings at school. But - very few people actually come to parent meetings.

Have you ever attended a meeting or activity for parents at any of your children's schools during the past two years?

1. Yes 2. No 9. NS/DK

IF NO OR NS/DK, SKIP TO Q. 41a

40b. People have told us many different things about parent meetings they have attended. From your experience with parent meetings, how much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

| | Agree Strongly | Agree Somewhat | Disagree Somewhat | Disagree Strongly | NS/DK |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| a. Meetings were well-organized. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 9 |
| b. Leaders knew what they were doing. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 9 |
| c. Parents' ideas and opinions were listened to. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 9 |
| d. Provisions were made for parents with differing language backgrounds. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 9 |
| e. If problems came up, they were usually solved. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 9 |

40b. (continued)

| | | Agree Strongly | Agree Somewhat | Disagree Somewhat | Disagree Strongly | NS/DK |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| f. | Leaders used words which parents could understand. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 9 |
| g. | Everybody had a fair chance to talk. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 9 |
| h. | Meetings dealt with topics parents wanted to hear about. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 9 |
| i. | Parents were treated as adults. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 9 |
| j. | Principal/vice principal was available to participate. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 9 |
| k. | Teachers were available to participate. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 9 |

40c. What other descriptions would you add?

a. _____

41a. Do you feel that parents of each of the cultural groups represented at your child's school are equally welcome to participate in meetings and activities?

1. Yes  2. No  9. NS/DK

41b. IF NO, why do you feel they are not equally welcome? PROBE FOR TWO

a. _____

b. _____

42. A large number of parents never come to school. How much do you agree or disagree that each of the following is a reason for parents not coming to school?

| | Agree Strongly | Agree Somewhat | Disagree Somewhat | Disagree Strongly | NS/D |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| a. Parents do not have the time to come. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 9 |
| b. Programs for parents are not related to what parents want to hear about. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 9 |
| c. Parents are too tired raising a family and earning a living to come. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 9 |
| d. Children are against parents' coming to school. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 9 |
| e. Parents have an attitude that the schools are doing just fine. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 9 |
| f. No transportation to school. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 9 |
| g. A language/communication barrier. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 9 |
| h. Parents do not feel really welcome. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 9 |
| i. Little effort is made to find out what parents are concerned about. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 9 |
| j. Parents have an attitude that they should not interfere with the school. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 9 |
| k. Parents feel they do not know enough to be able to participate. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 9 |

42. (Continued)

| | | Agree Strongly | Agree Somewhat | Disagree Somewhat | Disagree Strongly | NS/DK |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| l. | Coming to school is not as important as other interests at home. | 1 | | 3 | 4 | 9 |
| m. | Parents feel that their child's education is the school's responsibility. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 9 |
| n. | The older a child gets, the less involved the parent becomes. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 9 |

43. How much information do you get from the following sources which helps you form your ideas and opinions about your children's schools?

| | | Most | Some | Little/None |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| a. | Your children | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| b. | Listening to other children | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| c. | Talking to persons at school | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| d. | Talk in the neighborhood | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| e. | Other parents | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| f. | Newspapers/ Magazines/ TV/Radio | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| g. | School Bulletins/ Newsletters | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| h. | Relatives/Friends | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| i. | Visiting or working in the school | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| j. | Talking/listening where people often meet: church, clubs, on the street, stores, at work, etc. | 1 | 2 | 3 |

44a. Have you had problems dealing with school personnel?

1. Yes 2. No 9. NS/DK

44b. IF YES Specifically, what do you feel could be done to make contacts with school personnel more satisfying for you. PROBE FOR TWO

a. _____

b. _____

45. If your school asked for your ideas in solving some of the problems it faces, do you feel that your ideas would be respected and considered fairly?

1. Yes 2. No 9. NS/DK

46. Do you feel that your child's school is interested in sharing its problems with you?

1. Yes 2. No 9. NS/DK

47a. If you felt that your child needed a different teacher at school, would you try to have the change made?

1. Yes 2. No 9. NS/DK

47b. IF YES, What do you think the chances would be of having the change made?

1. Very Good 2. Good 3. Not Good 9. NS/DK

48. How comfortable would you feel in contacting the school about your child?

1. Very Comfortable 2. Comfortable 3. Not Very Comfortable

4. Would Not Contact School 9. NS/DK

49. If you have had contacts with the following persons working at your child's school, how satisfied were you with those contacts?

| | Very Satisfied | Satisfied | Not Satisfied | No Contact |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| a. Classroom Teacher | 1 | 2 | 3 | 9 |
| b. Counselor | 1 | 2 | 3 | 9 |
| c. Custodian | 1 | 2 | 3 | 9 |
| d. District Administrator | 1 | 2 | 3 | 9 |
| e. Instructional Aide | 1 | 2 | 3 | 9 |
| f. Itinerant Teacher | 1 | 2 | 3 | 9 |
| g. Nurse | 1 | 2 | 3 | 9 |
| h. Occupational Therapist | 1 | 2 | 3 | 9 |
| i. Other Parents | 1 | 2 | 3 | 9 |
| j. Physical Therapist | 1 | 2 | 3 | 9 |
| k. Principal | 1 | 2 | 3 | 9 |
| l. Psychologist | 1 | 2 | 3 | 9 |
| m. Resource Specialist | 1 | 2 | 3 | 9 |
| n. Resource Teacher | 1 | 2 | 3 | 9 |
| o. Secretary/ Office Staff | 1 | 2 | 3 | 9 |
| p. Special Education Parent Facilitators | 1 | 2 | 3 | 9 |
| q. Speech/Lang. Therapist | 1 | 2 | 3 | 9 |
| r. Vice Principal | 1 | 2 | 3 | 9 |

50a. If you could name only one problem which interferes with your participation in your child's educational program, what would that problem be?

a. _____

50b. What could the school do to help you solve that problem?

a._____

51. Are their any additional comments that you would like to make about the district special education program?

52. Do you think this interview has been worth the time you have given to it?

1. Yes  2. Probably  3. No  9. NS/DK

53. In terms of its value or helpfulness to you, how would you rate the interview?

1. Excellent  2. Good  3. Fair  4. Poor  9. NS/DK

54. Would you be willing to work with other parents and school persons in studying the results of the interviews and in planning programs to improve home-school communication?

1. Yes  2. No  9. NS/DK

# APPENDIX D

# TEACHER INTERVIEW FORM

# TEACHER INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

This is a study of parent participation in special education. We are interested in your ideas and opinions.

We hope that you will say what you really think. Please remember that what you say will be kept strictly confidential. There are no "right" or "wrong" answers.

When we are mentioning your school, we are referring to the school where you taught last year or to your current school if you are new in the San Diego City School District.

---

IF NOT PRE-CODED, MARK QUESTIONS 1 THROUGH 6. QUESTION AS NECESSARY.

---

1. Interviewee

   1. Male  2. Female

2. Number of years taught

   a._____

3. Number of years taught in special education

   a._____

4. School

   1. Hoover  2. Wilson  3. Adams  4. Euclid

   5. Barton  6. Fairhaven  7. Mission Beach

   8. Revere  9. Riley  10. Schweitzer

5. Primary program category

| 1. LH | 2. CH | 3. PH | 4. SH | 5. Reg.Ed |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| a. Spec. Day Class | | a. Spec.Day Class | a. Autistic | |
| b. Resource Spec. | | b. D.I.S. | b. Dev.Hand. | |
| | | | c. S.E.D. | |
| | | | d. T.M.R. | |

6. Teacher's ethnic code

   1. Hispanic  2. White  3. Black  4. Asian or Pac. Islander

   5. Amer. Ind. or Alaskan  6. Portuguese  7. Filipino  8. Indochinese

7. During this past school year, by which of the following ways have parents contacted you personally about their children?

| 1. PHONE | 2. NOTE OR LETTER | 3. VISIT TO SCHOOL |
|---|---|---|
| 1. Yes 2. No | 1. Yes 2. No | 1. Yes 2. No |
| 9. NS/DK | 9. NS/DK | |

8. During this past school year, have you talked to or written to most of the parents of your students?

| 1. Yes | 2. No | 9. NS/DK |
|---|---|---|

9. When you talk to or write to the parents of your students which of the following are reasons for the personal contact?

| | YES | NO | OCCASIONALLY | NS/DK |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| a. To give them information about school programs or activities? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 9 |
| b. To share some good things about their child? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 9 |
| c. To ask for help with school activities? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 9 |
| d. To ask them to be a classroom volunteer? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 9 |
| e. Or Tutor? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 9 |
| f. To report a behavior or attendance problem? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 9 |

10. Of the reasons I mentioned which is most often the reason for the personal contact?

1. a  2. b  3. c  4. d

5. e  6. f  9. NS/DK

11. Have you invited parents to observe (watch) classroom teaching in your classroom?

1. Yes  2. No  9. NS/DK

12a. Have most parents observed in your classroom? If Yes, go to Question 14a

1. Yes  2. No  9. NS/DK

12b. IF NO, would you be interested in having parents observe your classroom?

1. Yes  2. No  9. NS/DK

13. How often do you think you should be contacted by parents?

1. Weekly  2. Monthly  3. When there is a problem

4. Other  9. NS/DK

14. At which of the following times would you be willing have a conference with parents?

PROBE FOR A "YES" OR "NO" ON EACH ANSWER.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| BEFORE SCHOOL IN THE MORNING | 1. Yes | 2. No |
| DURING THE SCHOOL DAY | 1. Yes | 2. No |
| LATE AFTERNOON | 1. Yes | 2. No |
| EARLY EVENING | 1. Yes | 2. No |
| SATURDAY | 1. Yes | 2. No |

15. Would you be willing to make home visits?

1. Yes  2. No  9. NS/DK

16. Do you think the district identified your students' needs as early as possible?

1. Yes  2. No  9. NS/DK

17. Do you feel that most parents are aware of their rights?

1. Yes 2. No 9. NS/DK

18. How satisfied were you with the time taken from the time of identification to the actual time services were provided to your students?

1. Very Satisfied 2. Satisfied 3. Not Satisfied
9. NS/DK

19a. Do you feel most parents were an active participants in the development of the Individualized Education Program (I.E.P.)?

1. Yes IF YES, go to 19b 2. No 9. NS/DK

19b. Did most parents offer any suggestions about their child's placement in special education?

1. Yes IF YES, go to 19c 2. No 9. NS/DK

19c. Please explain your answer to 19b.

a. _____

20a. Were the goals and objectives set for your students in the Individualized Education Program (I.E.P.) understood by most of the parents?

1. Yes 2. No 9. NS/DK

20b. Do most parents work with you in accomplishing these goals and objectives?

1. Yes 2. No 9. NS/DK

20c. Were the goals and objectives written in such a manner that most parents can work on some of them at home?

1. Yes 2. No 9. NS/DK

21. Did the parents of your students sign and receive a copy of their child's Individualized Education Program (IEP)?

1. Yes 2. No 9. NS/DK

22. In your opinion, are your students receiving all the special education services described in the Individualized Education Program (IEP)?

1. Yes, all
2. Yes, some
3. No, none
9. Do not know

23. If the parents were unable to attend the planning meeting, did the school suggest another meeting to ensure their participation in planning the Individualized Education Program (I.E.P.)?

1. Yes
2. No
9. NS/DK

24. In general, how would you rate the effectiveness of other professionals in your school district who make decisions regarding your students special education programs?

1. Very Effective
2. Somewhat Effective
3. Not Effective
9. NS/DK

25. In general, how would you rate the effectiveness of parents in making decisions regarding their child's special education programs?

1. Very Effective
2. Somewhat Effective
3. Not Effective
9. NS/DK

26. How well do you feel your students have been accepted by the regular teaching staff?

1. Poor acceptance
2. Average acceptance
3. Above average acceptance
4. Unable to determine
5. Not applicable - no regular Ed. services

27. How satisfied would you say you are with your students' current special education programs?

1. Very satisfied
2. Somewhat satisfied
3. Neither satisfied or dissatisfied
4. Somewhat dissatisfied
5. Very dissatisfied
9. NS/DK

28. Does your school have a Parent Teacher Association (PTA), Parent Student Teacher Association (PSTA), or other parent group?

1. Yes 2. No 9. NS/DK

29a. Have you participated in any of those activities for parents this past school year?

1. Yes 2. No 9. NS/DK

29b. IF NO, what changes need to be made so that you would be willing to come to the meetings or activities? PROBE FOR TWO

a. _____

b. _____

30a. Have most parents participated in those activities during the past school year?

1. Yes 2. No 9. NS/DK

30b. IF NO, what changes need to be made so that parents might be willing to attend? PROBE FOR TWO

a. _____

b. _____

31a. Do School Bulletins or Newsletters give you the kinds of information you want parents to receive?

1. Yes 2. No 9. NS/DK

31b. IF NO, what other kinds of information do you want them to receive?

PROBE FOR TWO

a. _____

b. _____

32. How satisfied are your students with the school as a place to learn?

1. Very satisfied  2. Satisfied  3. Not satisfied

4. Have not said much

33. Do you feel that the atmosphere at the school helps your students make friends easily?

1. Yes  2. No  9. NS/DK

33a. How much do you agree or disagree with the rules or policy of your school for handling discipline?

1. Agree strongly  2. Agree

3. Disagree  4. Disagree strongly

33b. IF DISAGREE OR DISAGREE STRONGLY, what specific suggestions do you have as to how your school should handle discipline? PROBE FOR TWO

a. _____

b. _____

34. Many students and parents are asking for a kind of education that prepares students to be a responsible member of society. How successful is your program?

1. Very successful  2. Successful

3. Not very successful  9. NS/DK

35a. Did you feel that most parents know that records of their child's progress in school are available to them for review and discussion?

1. Yes  2. No  9. NS/DK

35b. IF YES, have any of the parents examined their child's records at school?

1. Yes  2. No  9. NS/DK

36a. Are your students being taught any kinds of knowledge or behavior in the home which conflicts or differs with what you are teaching him/her at school?

1. Yes 2. No 3. NS/DK

36b. IF YES, would you mention some of the differences? PROBE FOR TWO

a. _____

b. _____

37a. How often do your students miss school during the school year?

1. Rarely 2. Occasionally

3. Often 4. NS/DK

37b. Were the absences due to any of the following reasons?

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Illness/Injury | 1. Yes | 2. No | 9. NS/DK |
| Did not want to go | 1. Yes | 2. No | 9. NS/DK |
| Family Business | 1. Yes | 2. No | 9. NS/DK |
| Overslept | 1. Yes | 2. No | 9. NS/DK |
| Medical/Dental Appointment | 1. Yes | 2. No | 9. NS/DK |
| Transportation Problems | 1. Yes | 2. No | 9. NS/DK |

38. How many days in a month do you feel that your students could be absent before the absence affects the child's progress in school?

a. _____

39a. The last time that you invited parents to come to a school event or activity, did most parents attend?

1. Yes 2. No 9. NS/DK

39b. IF NO, do you recall why they did not attend? PROBE FOR TWO

a. _____

b. _____

40a. Often, parents say that they are interested in attending parent meetings at school. But - very few people actually come to parent meetings.

Have you ever attended a meeting or activity for parents at your school during the past two years?

1. Yes  2. No  9. NS/DK

IF NO OR NS/DK, SKIP TO Q. 41a

40b. People have told us many different things about parent meetings they have attended. From your experience with parent meetings, how much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

| | Agree Strongly | Agree Somewhat | Disagree Somewhat | Disagree Strongly | NS/DK |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| a. Meetings were well-organized. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 9 |
| b. Leaders knew what they were doing. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 9 |
| c. Parents' ideas and opinions were listened to. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 9 |
| d. Provisions were made for parents with differing language backgrounds. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 9 |
| e. If problems came up, they were usually solved. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 9 |
| f. Leaders used words which parents could understand. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 9 |
| g. Everybody had a fair chance to talk. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 9 |
| h. Meetings dealt with topics parents wanted to hear about. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 9 |
| i. Parents were treated as adults. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 9 |
| j. Principal/vice principal was available to participate. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 9 |
| k. Teachers were available to participate. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 9 |

40c. What other descriptions would you add?

a._____

41a. Do you feel that parents of each of the cultural groups represented at your school are equally welcome to participate in meetings and activities?

1. Yes 2. No 9. NS/DK

41b. IF NO, why do you feel they are not equally welcome? PROBE FOR TWO

a._____

b._____

42. A large number of parents never come to school. How much do you agree or disagree that each of the following is a reason for parents not coming to school?

| | Agree Strongly | Agree Somewhat | Disagree Somewhat | Disagree Strongly | NS/DK |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| a. Parents do not have the time to come. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 9 |
| b. Programs for parents are not related to what parents want to hear about. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 9 |
| c. Parents are too tired raising a family and earning a living to come. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 9 |
| d. Children are against parents' coming to school. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 9 |
| e. Parents have an attitude that the schools are doing just fine. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 9 |
| f. No transportation to school. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 9 |
| g. A language/communication barrier. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 9 |
| h. Parents do not feel really welcome. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 9 |

| | | Agree Strongly | Agree Somewhat | Disagree Somewhat | Disagree Strongly | NS/DK |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| i. | Little effort is made to find out what parents are concerned about. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 9 |
| j. | Parents have an attitude that they should not interfere with the school. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 9 |
| k. | Parents feel they do not know enough to be able to participate. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 9 |
| l. | Coming to school is not as important as other interests at home. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 9 |
| m. | Parents feel that their child's education is the school's responsibility | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 9 |
| n. | The older a child gets, the less involved the parent becomes. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 9 |

43. How much information do you feel parents get from the following sources which helps them form ideas and opinions about their child's schools?

| | | Most | Some | Little/None |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| a. | Their children | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| b. | Listening to other other children | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| c. | Talking to persons at school | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| d. | Talk in the neighborhood | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| e. | Other parents | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| f. | Newspapers/Magazines TV/Radio | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| g. | School Bulletins/ Newsletters | 1 | 2 | 3 |

| | Most | Some | Little/None |
|---|---|---|---|
| h. Relatives/Friends | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| i. Visiting or working in the school | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| j. Talking/listening where people often meet: church, clubs, on the street, stores, at work, etc. | 1 | 2 | 3 |

44a. Have you had problems dealing with parents?

1. Yes 2. No 9. NS/DK

44b. IF YES, Specifically, what do you feel could be done to make contacts with parents more satisfying for you. PROBE FOR TWO

a. _____

b. _____

45. If your school asked for your ideas in solving some of the problems it faces, do you feel that your ideas would be respected and considered fairly?

1. Yes 2. No 9. NS/DK

46. Do you feel that your school is interested in sharing its problems with you?

1. Yes 2. No 9. NS/DK

47a. If a parent of a student in your class felt rather strongly that the child needed a different teacher, would you tend to support the transfer?

1. Yes 2. No 9. NS/DK

47b. IF YES, What do you think the chances would be of having the transfer made?

1. Very Good 2. Good 3. Not Good 9. NS/DK

48. In general, how comfortable would you feel in contacting parents about their child?

1. Very comfortable  2. Comfortable  3. Not very comfortable

4. Would not contact parents  9. NS/DK

49. If you have had contacts with the following persons working at your school, how satisfied were you with those contacts?

| | Very Satisfied | Satisfied | Not Satisfied | No Contact |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| a. Classroom Teachers | 1 | 2 | 3 | 9 |
| b. Counselor | 1 | 2 | 3 | 9 |
| c. Custodian | 1 | 2 | 3 | 9 |
| d. District Administrator | 1 | 2 | 3 | 9 |
| e. Instructional Aide | 1 | 2 | 3 | 9 |
| f. Itinerant Teacher | 1 | 2 | 3 | 9 |
| g. Nurse | 1 | 2 | 3 | 9 |
| h. Occupational Therapist | 1 | 2 | 3 | 9 |
| i. Parents | 1 | 2 | 3 | 9 |
| j. Physical Therapist | 1 | 2 | 3 | 9 |
| k. Principal | 1 | 2 | 3 | 9 |
| l. Psychologist | 1 | 2 | 3 | 9 |
| m. Resource Specialist | 1 | 2 | 3 | 9 |
| n. Resource Teacher | 1 | 2 | 3 | 9 |
| o. Secretary/ Office Staff | 1 | 2 | 3 | 9 |
| p. Special Education Parent Facilitators | 1 | 2 | 3 | 9 |
| q. Speech/Language Therapist | 1 | 2 | 3 | 9 |
| r. Vice Principal | 1 | 2 | 3 | 9 |

50a. If you could name only one problem which interferes with parents' participating in their children's educational programs, what would that problem be?

a._____

50b. What could the school do to help parents solve that problem?

a._____

51. Are their any additional comments that you would like to make about the district special education program?

52. Do you think this interview has been worth the time you have given to it?

1. Yes  2. Probably  3. No  9. NS/DK

53. In terms of its value or helpfulness to you, how would you rate the interview?

1. Excellent  2. Good  3. Fair  4. Poor  9. NS/DK

54. Would you be willing to work with parents and other school personnel in studying the results of the interviews and in planning programs to improve home-school communication?

1. Yes  2. No  9. NS/DK

# APPENDIX E

## LETTER TO PARENTS

SAN DIEGO CITY SCHOOLS

92

**STUDENT SERVICES DIVISION**
EDUCATION CENTER
4100 Normal St. San Diego, CA 92103
293-8446

August 15, 1980

Dear

In the next few days one of the Special Education Parent Facilitators from the San Diego Unified School District will be calling you. She will be inviting you to participate in a study of how parents are involved in their child's special education program. Specifically, she will ask if she can arrange a time to come to your home to get your ideas about what families and schools can do to improve special education programs for children.

San Diego Unified School District, San Diego State University, and the State Department of Education are working cooperatively on the study. The results will be used to make recommendations for program improvement. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Eleanor Lynch, Associate Professor, Department of Special Education, Project Director, at 265-6630.

I hope that you will have time to give us your ideas. Thank you for your help.

Sincerely,

Daniel H. Lochtefeld

Daniel H. Lochtefeld
Director
Special Education Department

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# APPENDIX F

## CONSENT FORM FOR PARENTS

CONSENT FORM FOR PARENTS

You are being invited to participate in a study of how parents are involved in their child's special education program and how they would like to be involved. You were selected as a possible participant because you have a child receiving special education services. We are especially interested in problems encountered by low income parents, but we are interviewing parents at all income levels.

If you decide to participate, an interviewer will call you to set up a time that is convenient for you to talk with him/her. The interviewer will come to your home and ask you a set of questions about how you participate in your child's school program and how you think schools could improve their contacts with parents. The interview will take between forty-five minutes and an hour. There are no right or wrong answers to the questions, we just want your opinion. Probably the most difficult part of it will be to find an hour that is convenient for you.

Nothing that you tell the interviewer will be identified with you personally. In other words, what you say will remain confidential. After all of the interviews have been completed, all of the answers will be summarized and that summary will be presented to selected staff at the San Diego Unified School District and to selected staff of and advisers to the California State Department of Education. The summary will be presented to assist them in developing ways of improving home-school relationships.

The decision to participate or not participate is up to you. Your decision, either way, will not prejudice your future relations with the San Diego Unified School District, your child's principal or teachers. If you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw your consent at any time without penalty or prejudice.

If you have any questions, please ask us. If you think of other questions later, Dr. Ellie Lynch will be happy to answer them. You can call her at 265-6630.

YOU ARE MAKING A DECISION WHETHER OR NOT TO PARTICIPATE. YOUR SIGNATURE INDICATES THAT YOU HAVE DECIDED TO PARTICIPATE HAVING READ THE INFORMATION PROVIDED ABOVE.

_____ _____

Date Signature

_____

Signature of Project Representative

# APPENDIX G

## LETTERS TO TEACHERS

**ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS DIVISION**
EDUCATION CENTER
4100 Normal St. San Diego, Ca 92103
(714) 298-4681

In the next few days one of the Special Education Parent Facilitators from the San Diego Unified School District will be calling you. She will be inviting you to participate in a study about parents' participation in their child's special education program. Specifically, she will ask if she can arrange a time to come to interview you at school during non-instructional time, at your home, or at another mutually convenient place. The interview will take approximately 45 minutes and will focus on your perceptions about the level of parental participation, the ways to encourage participation, and your experiences with parental participation. Everything that you say will be kept confidential, and only aggregate data will be reported.

San Diego Unified School District, San Diego State University, and the State Department of Education are working cooperatively on the study. Over 100 parents have already been interviewed and their comments will be combined with yours to provide recommendations for program improvement. We are very interested in hearing the teachers' points of view on this important issue and hope that you will participate. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Eleanor Lynch, Associate Professor, Department of Special Education, San Diego State University, Project Director at 265-6630 or 265-6665.

Thank you for your help.

Sincerely,

Harry B. Ohlson
Assistant Superintendent
Elementary Schools

HBO/ff

SAN DIEGO CITY SCHOOLS



**SECONDARY SCHOOLS DIVISION**

EDUCATION CENTER
4100 Normal St., San Diego, CA 92103
(714) 293-8400

In the next few days one of the Special Education Parent Facilitators from the San Diego Unified School District will be calling you. She will be inviting you to participate in a study about parents' participation in their child's special education program. Specifically, she will ask if she can arrange a time to come to interview you at school during non-instructional time, at your home, or at another mutually convenient place. The interview will take approximately 45 minutes and will focus on your perceptions about the level of parental participation, the ways to encourage participation, and your experiences with parental participation. Everything that you say will be kept confidential, and only aggregate data will be reported.

San Diego Unified School District, San Diego State University, and the State Department of Education are working cooperatively on the study. Over 100 parents have already been interviewed and their comments will be combined with yours to provide recommendations for program improvement. We are very interested in hearing the teachers' points of view on this important issue and hope that you will participate. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Eleanor Lynch, Associate Professor, Department of Special Education, San Diego State University, Project Director at 265-6630 or 265-6665.

Thank you for your help.

Sincerely,

R. J. Jackson

Richard Jackson
Assistant Superintendent
Secondary Schools

RJ:ak

# APPENDIX H

## CONSENT FORM FOR TEACHERS

CONSENT FORM FOR TEACHERS

You are being invited to participate in a study of how parents are involved in their child's special education program. You were selected because you teach in a special education program in the San Diego Unified School District where a sample of parents are also being interviewed.

If you decide to participate, an interviewer will call you to set up a time and place that is convenient for you to talk with him/her. The interview will take thirty to forty-five minutes. The questions relate to your views about parental involvement and what you think might be done to encourage parents to take an active role in their child's education.

All of your comments will be kept confidential; only aggregate data will be reported. A summary of teacher responses along with a summary of parent responses will be presented to selected staff at San Diego Unified School District and to selected staff of and advisers to the California State Department of Education. The summary will be presented to assist them in developing strategies for encouraging positive, parental involvement.

Your decision of whether or not to participate will not prejudice your future relations with the San Diego Unified School District, the State Department of Education, or San Diego State University. If you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw your consent and to discontinue your participation at any time without prejudice.

If you have any questions, please ask us. If you have any additional questions later, Dr. Ellie Lynch will be happy to answer them. She can be reached at San Diego State University at 265-6630.

YOU ARE MAKING A DECISION WHETHER OR NOT TO PARTICIPATE. YOUR SIGNATURE INDICATES THAT YOU HAVE DECIDED TO PARTICIPATE HAVING READ THE INFORMATION PROVIDED ABOVE.

_____ _____

Date Signature

_____

Signature of Project Representative